DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 186 959 CS 502 919

AUTHOR Ritter, Kurt W.; Andrews, James R.
TITLE The American Ideology: Reflections of the Revolution in American Rhetoric. Bicentennial Monographs.
INSTITUTION Speech Communication Association, Falls Church, Va.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 131p.
AVAILABLE FROM Speech Communication Association, 5105 Backlick Rd., Annandale, VA 22003 ($5.75, SCA members 10% discount)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Civil Rights; *Cultural Images; Imperialism; *Intellectual History; *Persuasive Discourse; Presidents; *Revolutionary War (United States); *Rhetoric; Rhetorical Criticism; Speeches; *United States History; Values
IDENTIFIERS Bicentennial

ABSTRACT

This monograph examines the way in which ideas emerged and grew in the rhetorical process of creating an American people, and the ways in which the ideas were transformed into fundamental symbols that have exerted their influence throughout United States history. The first chapter analyzes certain discourses of the American Revolution to show the rhetorical strategy developed by the patriots with the goals of destroying the British ethos and, at the same time, creating a new American ethos. The second chapter analyzes inaugural addresses of presidents from George Washington through Jimmy Carter to show how the rhetoric of these addresses attempted generally to bring to bear the prestige of the past in attacking contemporary problems, specifically employing and exploiting the influential ideas generated by the discourse of the Revolution. The final two chapters separately examine two controversies--the imperialism debate at the turn of the twentieth century and the civil rights struggle of this century--to elucidate the impact of the continuing rhetoric of the Revolution on specific American actions. In its conclusions, the monograph notes that the rhetoric of the Revolution established a durable, adaptable ideology that has presided over the evolutionary processes of the United States. (GT)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

THE AMERICAN IDEOLOGY: REFLECTIONS OF THE REVOLUTION IN AMERICAN RHETORIC

ED186959

KURT W. RITTER
AND
JAMES R. ANDREWS

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Speech Communication Association
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS212179

THE SPEECH COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION

BICENTENNIAL MONOGRAPHS

2

Copyright © 1978
Speech Communication Association

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While undertaking this study, the authors have benefited from the kind interest and the generous support of numerous individuals and institutions. Professor Leland Griffin of Northwestern University read an early draft of this monograph; his detailed and careful comments and criticisms have surely improved the present version. Similarly, the rest of the editorial board of the SCA Bicentennial Monograph Series provided helpful suggestions from the inception of the project in 1974. In particular, the senior editor, Professor Robert Cathcart of Queens College, City University of New York, has been unfailing in his enthusiasm, his goodwill, and his editor's ink!

The University of Illinois and Indiana University, as well as the Speech Communication Association, have made substantial contributions to the completion of this volume. These universities supported the authors' work through a sabbatical leave, a faculty fellowship, and a research grant. This institutional support was made possible through the efforts of our departmental administrators, including Kenneth E. Andersen, J. Jeffery Auer, Robert G. Gunderson, and Roger E. Nebergall. In addition, several research libraries made their services and resources fully available to the authors, including the Massachusetts Historical Library, Lilly Library of Indiana University, the Congregational Library (Boston), the Manuscripts and Archives Division of the New York Public Library (Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations), Indiana University Library, and the University of Illinois Library. Sharon Medlock typed—and retyped—several complete versions of the manuscript with the care and interest of a genuine collaborator.

Perhaps the most valued assistance came from our colleagues at Indiana University and the University of Illinois; among these colleagues were our spouses, Ellen Ritter and Moya Andrews, who took time from their own research to assist us. Finally, we wish to acknowledge the enduring influence of Robert G. Gunderson upon our study of American public discourse. As a teacher, a critic and a friend, he has inspired a generation of public address scholars, and it is to him that the present monograph is dedicated. While all the aforementioned individuals and institutions share in whatever merit this monograph possesses, the authors assume the responsibility for any shortcomings.

K. W. R., Urbana, Illinois

J. R. A., Bloomington, Indiana

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

The celebration of the nation's Bicentennial has stimulated a wide and serious exploration of American ideals and American experience in the broadest sense. It has produced a unique time and place in which to examine our American heritage, its beginnings and its continued development. It has called forth scholarly works providing us with new insights into events, words and deeds which are the legacy of the American Revolution. Such a work is the Monograph presented here.

Professors Kurt Ritter and James Andrews have presented us with a view of the American ideology which is at once macroscopic in its application to American history and microscopic in its examination of the language and thought which has created and sustained that unique set of symbols and values known as "American." Beginning with the American Revolution they have examined a wide variety of ceremonial and occasional utterances locating those symbols and visions woven together rhetorically in a way that created a "community"; a new and unique community chosen by God to become a great republican empire where the tree of liberty could grow and flourish. Through their analysis they have established the centrality of the rhetorical process in selecting and eulogizing events, like the Boston Massacre orations, which were the spawning grounds of the American ideology.

Not only have Professors Ritter and Andrews given us new insights into the rhetoric of the American Revolution as the birthplace of the American ideology, they have traced that ideology through American history analyzing its potency in shaping and molding the American vision of the Revolution itself, the Civil War, the conflict over imperialism and the contemporary civil rights struggle. In turn, they have pointed out the ways in which the ideology itself has been shaped to fit new visions necessitated by a growing and changing America. Despite such alterations, the American ideology according to our authors has remained essentially intact, "operating as a yardstick against which those who seek change can measure American behavior."

In this monograph we can see the rhetorical critic at work, probing into the past, locating the symbols and forms men used to comprehend the circumstances which they confronted at the time of the Revolution. These in time became symbolized in the American ideology. The authors' analyses reveal how in turn this ideology came to sanctify the past for those who

faced new circumstances with the assurance that they were carrying on the views and values of the Founding Fathers. Thus, through this monograph we are able to see more clearly the Continuing American Revolution as a symbolic force in all rhetorical transactions affecting our national policies and practices.

This monograph by Professors Ritter and Andrews is one of a series sponsored and published by the Speech Communication Association. The series, entitled "The Continuing American Revolution," was first conceived in 1972 by a special committee of the Association. The committee was charged with finding appropriate ways for the Speech Communication Association "to honor the American Revolution both as an historic event and as a symbol of a continuing American social regeneration." One of its recommendations was that the Association establish an editorial board which would solicit monographs reflecting the research and thought of prominent speech communication scholars about the American Revolution as an ongoing communication of ideas symbolizing American experience and values.

An editorial board was formed. Its members are Ernest Bormann, University of Minnesota; Parke Burgess, Queens College; Richard Gregg, The Pennsylvania State University; Leland Griffin, Northwestern University and myself. The editorial board has searched far and wide to find significant and appropriate studies for these monographs and it is very pleased to have had a part in bringing this most worthwhile study by Professors Ritter and Andrews into print. As Senior Editor I wish to express my deepest appreciation to each member of the editorial board for his unselfish devotion of time and effort to this series. All have extensive teaching and research duties which place heavy demands on their time, yet all have given unhesitatingly of time and expertness to this effort. I am most grateful. I am grateful also to William Work, Executive Secretary of the Speech Communication Association for his efforts in guiding this monograph to completion, and to the various members of the Speech Communication Association's Administrative Committee and Finance Board over the last four years for their continuing support and encouragement.

Robert S. Cathcart
Senior Editor
Queens College

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
EDITOR'S FOREWORD	v
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
I. CREATING AN AMERICAN IDEOLOGY	5
II. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE	40
III. LIBERTY OR EMPIRE?	69
IV. THE UNFINISHED REVOLUTION	93
CONCLUSION	118

INTRODUCTION

Human beings carry in themselves and in their world a collective past; a history of their people, their culture, their country—not *the* history but *a* history, wrought by an intricate intermingling of events, persons, and abstract notions that are filtered through a screen of interpretation and perception.

The distinguished British scholar Sir Lewis Namier saw history as a way for man "to master the past imminent both in his person and in his social setting and to induce in him a fuller understanding of the present."[1] Historical forces do, indeed, press upon contemporary human beings, but those forces must somehow be mediated; they are not experienced directly, but through a conduit that carries what has gone before into the present. Namier would doubtless have looked on the study of history, as does J. H. Plumb, as a "process which increases man's awareness of himself, that strengthens his chance of controlling himself and his environment," as a search for what is "objective and true." But as Plumb has so brilliantly observed in *The Death of the Past*, "real" happenings are often reported, explained, and understood in such a way as to shape the present in conformation with the goals or attitudes that prevail in a society. Plumb accordingly wishes to distinguish history from "the past" which "is always a created ideology with a purpose, designed to control individuals, or motivate societies, or inspire classes."[2] Even if one wishes to talk about history as what is true and the past as what is *made* of history, the fact remains that historical phenomena are *processed*.

Historical phenomena, then, are not inherently meaningful, or, at least, do not have one specific, inherent meaning. Ideas and events are given meaning as they are dealt with by those who directly or vicariously experience them and pass them on to others. Events need to be patterned in some way for the human mind to understand and cope with them. As C. V. Wedgewood observed: "History experienced is not simple for those who experience it." Yet although perspective is shortened, the contemporary actor could make sense out of the world he lived in. "He may not have known or suspected influences which have been later revealed; but he knew what he experienced in his mind or suffered in his flesh, and he knew what beliefs and what interests he admitted to be the motives of his actions."[3] As events unfold, then, foreground must be drawn from background,

context must be imposed; in short, meaning must be given through the influencing and shaping of perceptions. And not only must those who live through or with events organize their perceptions, but they inevitably pass on those organized perceptions to their posterity.

It is the function of rhetoric to enable people to pattern their realities in such a meaningful way. That is to say, events must be *symbolized* to be understood. The processing of historical phenomena is partly the discovery and exploitation of their symbolic power. This is not to suggest a conspiratorial notion of using events to further specific, and often hidden, aims. Rather it is to say that, as humans cannot ingest whole the myriad details and facets of any action or idea, they must be selective. This selectivity operates in two directions. A person may perceive selectively because of the context in which he sees himself to exist, and thus force a kind of psychological congruity on the event. At the same time, the connections between events may be searched for and discerned as a new or altered pattern, a new perception that has its own dimension of symbolic power. One might reasonably argue that rhetoric is the process whereby symbols are discovered and used as powerful forces in shaping thought and action.

Symbols derive from ideas which, when properly articulated and charged with sufficient force to shape perceptions, have the power to generate upheavals of volcanic proportions. Ideas promote, deter, liberate, enslave. Furthermore, ideas shaped by the rhetorical process are patterned; they are fitted together into an ideology which becomes in itself the organizing touchstone of a group's collective perception. We propose to undertake in this study an examination of the ways in which ideas emerged and grew in the rhetorical process of creating an American people, and of the ways in which such ideas were transformed into fundamental symbols that have exerted their influence throughout our history. We hold, in short, that in the discourse of late eighteenth-century America can be discerned a body of ideas, shaped into a motivating force through the rhetorical process, that helped to make a revolution and to mold for generations to come the perceptions of the heirs of that revolution. It is the workings of that rhetorical process that we hope to illuminate.

The first step in this investigation was to study certain discourses of the American Revolution to uncover the ways in which epideictic rhetoric functioned to create, in the words of Chaim Perelman, a "sense of communion centered around particular values recognized by the audience."[4] Epideictic, or ceremonial, orations constituted one of the three major types of Revolutionary pamphlets.[5] In these ceremonial addresses, commemorating, for example, election days, thanksgiving, and fast days, the landing of the Pilgrims, the Stamp Act repeal, the Battle of Lexington, and the Boston Massacre, the epideictic orator constructed and transmitted cultural myths, enhanced by his listeners' high regard for oratory as an intellectual activity.[6] Bombarded as they were by a cacophany of events, the colonists sought for some sort of harmony. In organizing and inter-

preting the events of their tumultuous era, the patriot orators followed a strategy from which emerged some fundamental ideas. Woven together into a unified perception, these ideas helped to make sense out of the rush of events. The ideology, then, was forged through and by a rhetorical process that defined and ordered values, interpreted events to conform to that value pattern, and led ultimately to the formulation of a unique perception—an American viewpoint. The first chapter examines this rhetorical strategy and the resultant ideology.

Once a pattern of ideas is set, it may function ideologically by serving as the criteria for judging a nation's progress and promise. Throughout American history, orators, expressing deep reverence for their Revolutionary heritage, reinforced the values implicit in the Revolutionary ideology and used the ideology both as a springboard for rhetorical invention and as a reference point for contemporary beliefs and policies. The second step in this investigation was to examine a body of discourse in which the American ideology might reasonably be expected to play a crucial role. With the Inaugural Address as the subject of analysis, the second chapter is devoted to a study of rhetorical attempts to reinforce and make use of the Revolutionary pattern of perception. The critical focus in this analysis is on the rhetorical process whereby that ideology operated as an idealized standard of national conduct.

An ideology, in order to remain viable, must adapt to its paradoxical position: it cannot remain completely static, nor can it afford to lose the sanction of timelessness. If it is to continue to function as the perceptual criteria for judging events, it must remain sufficiently aloof from any given context so as not to be compromised by that context, that is, to be made specific and not universal. Yet at the same time, the general criteria must be specifically applied. When the discourse is largely ceremonial, designed to cloak the present with the sanction of the past as in the Inaugural Addresses, the paradox is muted. The reverse is true when the discourse centers on a clash of values fundamental to the ideological foundation. Rhetoric then functions to reconcile the conflict while preserving the ideology intact; the ballast may have to be rearranged but the ship of state must not be allowed to founder. The question of America's imperial role vexed the nation at the turn of the century and created a crisis of belief in the values inherent in the ideology. In the third chapter, this controversy is examined in order to discover the ways in which a reconciliation ultimately emerged from the rhetoric generated by the debate.

Ironically, under the conditions described in this monograph, America's Revolutionary ideology is seen to function conservatively. Rhetorical strategies are designed to transmit the ideology so as to maintain the ideological construct itself and to reinforce perceptions consonant with the preservation of established institutions. Yet the ideology need not always operate in precisely such a fashion. It can also serve as a standard—a yardstick—against which those who seek change can measure American be-

havior. This, of course, is still an essentially conservative, reforming function since the standard is seen as possible of being met. On the other hand, the ideas which coalesced to form a revolutionary vision of the new country were always pregnant with revolutionary potential. During the upheavals of the 1960s a rhetorical strategy aimed at *contrasting* the ideology with reality developed. The ways in which reformist and radical rhetoric manipulated the ideology to change the status quo, rather than to praise it, is the subject of investigation in the fourth chapter.

The American ideology, then, forged in revolution, was made coherent, sustained, modified and transmitted to future generations for their very practical use in understanding their world. This rhetorical process mediated between ideas and people and bridged the generations. It has been our intention to illuminate this process. We do not argue a brief for the goodness or badness of ideology itself, or for the good or evil of what we have called the American ideology. We hold only that people do create and use systems of ideas to help them understand the world about them; the method whereby they are created and used is a rhetorical one, and by understanding it better we might better understand ourselves.

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

[1]Cited by John Brooke, "Namier and Namierism," *Studies in the Philosophy of History*, ed. George H. Nadel (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 97.

[2]J. H. Plumb, *The Death of the Past* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), pp. 16-17.

[3]C. V. Wedgewood, *The King's Peace: 1637-1641* (London: Collins Fontane, 1966), p. 15.

[4]Ch. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), pp. 116-117.

[5]Bernard Bailyn has classified Revolutionary pamphlets into three groups: (1) direct response to great events of the time, (2) pamphlet debates, and (3) commemorative addresses; see his *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 4-5.

[6]For example, Ezra Stiles, President of Yale College, held poetry in less esteem than oratory—an art he considered one of "the higher and more valued branches" of learning. See *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, ed. Franklin Dexter (New York: Scribners, 1901), I, 517.

CHAPTER I

CREATING AN AMERICAN IDEOLOGY

British North America in the latter part of the eighteenth century looked to England as home, and, although actual military conflict may finally have sealed the irreparability of the breach between the two, the psychological preparation for rebellion was as crucial as the taking up of arms. Torn by conflicting loyalties, the colonists needed to establish their own identities if they were to become revolutionaries. The effort was not easy. The transformation of American loyalties did not occur suddenly in 1776. The Declaration of Independence was simply an act of secession from Britain; indeed, the problem of emotional attachments to England continued to occupy American writers and speakers until 1783 and beyond.[1] Certainly right up until the moment of separation even staunch patriots could not reject their former attachments out of hand. In 1773, Dr. Benjamin Church did not hesitate to call himself "a British American freeholder" in an oration before Boston's leading patriots, and in March 1774, as radical a group as the Boston Committee of Correspondence reported that "the old good Will and Affection for the Parent Country" was not yet lost and would blossom again "If she returns to her former moderation and good humor." James Lovell, a Boston school teacher whom the British would soon imprison as a "spy," scorned talk of war as "a Slur on common humanity." In 1774, unaware of his troubled future, Lovell spoke warmly of "that habitual Affection of Englishman to Englishman."[2]

Traditional attachments continued to worry the revolutionaries even after the Declaration of Independence. In May of 1778 the Reverend Peter Thacher of Malden, Massachusetts warned Samuel Adams that the American Congress should avoid any "connexion [sic] with Britain." Perhaps favorable trade could be established in the future, Thacher speculated, but even this he would not allow "until every man had got thoroughly weaned from his old attachment to that land." The minister from Malden considered any peaceful intercourse between Americans and the British as "exceedingly dangerous," because many former colonists still retained "a fascination" and an "absurd affection" for the mother country.[3] Such affection did not, of course, promote what Chaim

Perelman has called a "community of minds" among those who would resist the authority of the Crown and Parliament.[4] On the contrary, so long as the colonists saw themselves as Englishmen, the Anglo-American controversy could become no more than a family dispute—a quarrel in which the colonists viewed England as the overbearing mother country, and the British perceived the colonists as trouble-some children of the empire. American unity could hardly be achieved unless a clear polarity of interests and attachments could be created. That formidable task was set for rhetoric. The rhetorical strategy which the patriots developed was an intricate one that had as its goal the destruction of the British ethos and, at the same time, the creation of a new American ethos. The discovery of this American national character provided a new anchor for Americans seeking an identity distinct from their British cousins. With an American ethos as the core concept, revolutionists could wean colonists from old affections and begin to construct an image of America totally independent from (and superior to) Great Britain. In a blend of point-counterpoint, patriot orators undertook to create and then fill an emotional vacuum. Obviously this is not to suggest that there were two distinct "steps" in the rhetorical strategy, but rather that the erosion of British prestige had to occur along with the glorification of the uniquely American ethos. For the purpose of analysis, however, the strands in the web may best be seen if examined separately.

The Revolutionary rhetoric analyzed in this study is drawn largely from speeches, sermons, pamphlets, broadsides and newspaper essays which resulted from the Boston Massacre of 1770 and which commemorated that altercation from 1771 to 1783. The Massacre itself became a highly symbolic event, an annual occasion for patriotic orators to reinvigorate revolutionary ardor. This rhetorical discourse also covered a span of time during which the revolution was brought to the point of arms, was fought, and was consolidated. John Adams regarded the orations commemorating the Massacre as "Monuments of the fluctuations of public opinion and general feeling in Boston, Massachusetts, New England, and the United States." As he looked back upon the Revolution in his later years Adams sighed that if he were but "fifty years younger," he would publish these orations in volumes and write the history of the nation "in commentaries upon them."[5] While other speakers and writers espoused the American cause throughout the colonies, the New Englanders were in the vanguard of the Revolution and produced a sizable and focused body of discourse worth careful examination. In order to avoid a too parochial view, however, this study will also use Revolutionary rhetoric from other colonies to explicate the development of an American ideology.

Ceremonial rhetoric such as the Boston Massacre Commemorations, annual election sermons, and fast and thanksgiving sermons, proved to be particularly important expressions of emerging American nationalism because they helped celebrate the values of the new nation and damn the

vices of the British. In a society undergoing great change, epideictic discourse becomes particularly important because it helps define and promote the values of the emerging culture. The ends of such discourse—to praise and to blame—quite naturally serve the process of attacking an old identity and creating a new one. Epideictic oratory is removed from immediate persuasive goals, yet at the same time it is "a central part of the art of persuasion." By strengthening the listeners' commitment to certain values, epideictic orators helped to establish "a sense of communion," a cultural unity, which would overcome older attachments.[6] Embedded in the Boston Massacre orations and other Revolutionary rhetoric can be found fundamental ideas that helped Americans to understand themselves, to differentiate themselves from their English cousins, to understand their own values and how these values were to be applied in the judgment of events, and ultimately, to understand their own uniqueness.

In these speeches patriot leaders responded to Americans' latent loyalty to England with two broad attacks on the British ethos—a denunciation of British soldiers as vile, blood-thirsty rapists and murderers, and a more temperate but vastly more damaging argument that the entire people of England had degenerated to a state of moral bankruptcy and had forfeited their right to liberty. The Boston Massacre Commemorations provided an excellent forum for attacks upon the British character because the annual affair naturally turned attention toward "the detestable Principles and arbitrary conduct" of the English. Those Americans who were prone to overlook or discount the evil nature of their erstwhile countrymen had to be sorted out in order to delineate sharply between patriots and loyalists. Along with the attack on the English went a condemnation of the "vile Ingratitude," the "abominable wickedness" of their American supporters.[7] Each year orators, ministers and newspaper editors reminded Americans of the streets "Stained with blood," "the piercing, agonizing groans," and "ye bloody butchers" who served as tools of "this *British* Military Tyranny."[8] Benjamin Church, himself a man of complex loyalties, proclaimed that "the shocking recollection" of the Massacre forced loyalty to stand "on tiptoe." Three years after the Massacre, this uncertain patriot easily departed on a flight of emotion, exclaiming that his "whole soul clamours for arms and is on fire to attack the brutal *bandetti*." To gaze upon "the mangled corpses of our brethern, and grinning *furies* over their carnage," he testified, "redoubles our resentment and makes revenge a virtue."[9]

The Massacre was, of course, a symbolic event in patriot rhetoric. It was tactically necessary to enlarge upon it to make clear the real, and sinister, significance of the event. Revolutionary spokesmen repeatedly reminded their audiences that the Boston Massacre exposed the evil designs of the entire British government. This was extremely important to the polar strategy. It was quite natural for Englishmen to be hostile and suspicious toward a standing army. To associate the actions of the army

with the entire British government and nation was a potent tactic in promoting the destruction of the British character. In 1772 an illustrated handbill proclaimed: "Americans! Bear in Remembrance the Horrid Massacre!" Below a woodcut engraving of the Boston Massacre scene, the poster urged:

Forever may AMERICA be preserved

From weak and wicked monarchs,

Tyrannical Ministers,

Abandoned Governors,

Their Underlings and Hirelings!

And may the

Machinations of artful, designing wretches,

Who would ENSLAVE THIS PEOPLE

Come to an end![10]

In this way the Massacre served to defame the character of all members of the British government, from the King himself to his lowest tax collector. Later orators pointed to the Boston killings as a sign of more widespread British atrocities, "as the horrid prelude" to the pillage, murder and rape which the British carried out "in every corner of America" where the King's armies had "been able to penetrate." Speakers regularly turned from the incident of 1770 to "a more ample field of violence, bloodshed and cruelty"—to Lexington, Bunker Hill, and beyond.[11]

The attack on British soldiers and officials was intense and played directly upon the religious values of the American audience. John Hancock denounced British agents as "noxious vermin," as "pillagers" thrusting their "dirty hands into the pockets of every American." The ungodly troops, he lamented, filled Boston with "riot and debauchery," and disturbed the Sabbath with "impious oaths and blasphemies."[12] Even before the war, American orators prophesied British atrocities against American civilians. In 1772 Joseph Warren's "alarmed imagination" foresaw "our houses wrap't in flames—our children subjected to the barbarous caprice of the raging soldiery—our beauteous virgins exposed to all the insolence of unbridled passions—our virtuous wives endeared to us by every tender tie, falling a sacrifice to worse then brutal violence."[13] The

use of the military as targets for harsh criticism permitted another tactic to further the strategy. Rape was a justified fear of the citizenry when war raged. The innocent American house-holder, when contrasted with the beastly British soldier, served not only to degrade further the British ethos, but also to heighten the contrast with American virtue.

Patriot orators' preoccupation with sexual assaults suggested an image of Britain as an incestuous parent raping his American daughter. With a frankness uncommon to eighteenth-century public discourse, Benjamin Hichborn sympathized with the "tender parent frantic with rage," dying in his doorway "rather than live the witness of his daughter's shame." He implored his audience to "hear the shrieks of virgin innocence calling in vain for succour from that arm which oft defended her!" As Hichborn recounted "the most barbarous violence upon the delicacy and virtue of the fair," he called out: "See the helpless victim of their brutish lust."[14] Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Austin asserted that such stories were "not flights of fancy, not the dictates of imagination," but grim realities. Austin in 1778, asked Boston's townspeople: "Does not the ear tingle when it hears the shrieks of helpless Virgins, dreadful victims to lust and barbarity!"[15] To complete the scene, the orators sometimes portrayed the "aged parent" pleading in vain as he witnessed "his daughter's shame." The Reverend John Lathrop, who had been attacking the British from his pulpit since 1770, spoke in 1778 of "the blooming virgin dressed for her nuptials" who had been "seized by savage hands, hurried away and murdered with unutterable cruelty."[16] Austin urged his listeners to blush not at these horried acts, but to repeat them to their children—"to ring in their young ears the dreadful tale of murders, rapes and massacres." The "conduct of Britain," he instructed, should be impressed upon youths "till their young breasts glow with ardor."[17]

Patriot propagandists added murder, pillaging, and Indian scalping to the list of British atrocities. The Reverend Mr. Lathrop assured his listeners that the British were not satisfied with military combat—no, "devastation, barbarity and murder have been their delight." They were so base, the minister asserted, that they "took peculiar pleasure" in defacing churches, converting them to barracks, barns and riding stables.[18] But the Boston minister was most horrified by the British paying Indians a bounty on scalps. While scalping other Indians was "neither new nor extraordinary," Lathrop regarded the hiring of "the Savages of America" to scalp the "decendants of Europeans" as an "unparalleled barbarity."[19] It also placed the British in the camp of the rampaging Indians, long the dread of the frontier and certainly seen as the enemies of Americans. In no small measure, the British ethos acquired the satanic qualities that Americans had only recently ascribed to the French because of their liaison with the "savages of the wilderness" during the French-Indian War.[20]

As a final facet of their portrait of the vile British, the Revolutionary spokesmen recounted the military exploits of English troops—"the ashes of our desolated towns" and the "ruin and desolation spread over our

fruitful villages."[21] The occupation of Boston, the British march through the Jersies, and the burning of Norfolk were all cited as evidence of the cowardice and depravity of an enemy "who not having spirit or ability to meet us in the field descend to these little mean methods of exciting terror."[22] In Revolutionary speeches, the British became monstrous—savages "breathing out thirstings" for American blood; sadists who "barely starved" captured militiamen.[23] Lathrop particularly stressed the cruel treatment of American prisoners in his 1778 sermon commemorating the Boston Massacre. After allowing their captives to suffer from hunger and cold, Lathrop recounted, the "sordid enemy" offered them only "the vilest insult" by inviting the prisoners to join the British army. The Boston minister reported that during the previous winter thousands of Americans had died in the British guard ships and prisons in New York; "they rather chose to perish in want of all things than draw their sword against the liberties of America." Lathrop held out little hope for those who survived; some were sent to England and then dispatched to the heathen East Indies "from whence they can have little or no reason to expect they shall ever return."[24]

No doubt these fevered appeals aroused immediate emotional responses from patriot audiences, encouraging them to resist Britain and sustain the war effort. The attacks upon the British soldiery, however, had the more profound effect of tarnishing the English ethos and inviting Americans to see the English not as mistaken but as essentially evil. In 1780 Jonathan Mason, formerly a law clerk under John Adams and a young man whom Abigail Adams fondly regarded as "an ambitious enterprising creature," confidently assured his Boston audience that only the experience of English atrocities had convinced Americans that they and Britain could "be friends no more." Jonathan Austin pointed to the British "bathing themselves in blood of our countrymen" and demand: "can we then wish a re-union with such a people?"[25] The key word in Austin's question is "people." Here the identification of the British soldiers and the British citizens is complete. The British people are represented as literally and figuratively raping America; the parent has become a monster attempting to ravish his child. The assertion that Englishmen were fundamentally different from Americans could not be easily accepted. This assertion would require that a history of friendship and mutual support be rewritten, and the English King be vilified as an earthly devil.[26] More important, Revolutionary spokesmen needed a comprehensive explanation for the decline of the English people; they needed such an explanation as much for themselves as for their American audience. If the English were vile and corrupt, what of their seed in America? How had the English cousins—descendants of the same forefathers as the virtuous Americans—fallen to their low condition? Patriot spokesmen addressed these questions in such a way as to allow Americans to ignore their cultural and material inferiority and to celebrate their moral superiority.

The vile, degenerate behavior by British troops acquired a broader significance; it came to be viewed as a symptom of the moral and physical decline of the British Empire. Seen as analogous to the Roman legions' colonial wars, the American Revolutionary War marked another cycle of civilization. William Tudor, who had recently returned to law practice after attaining the rank of lieutenant colonel at the age of twenty-seven, summarized this pervasive belief in just two sentences of his Boston Massacre oration in 1779. Speaking of universal laws which operated "in the political and moral, as well as in the physical world," Tudor pointed to the causes of national decline: "Those vices which ruined the illustrious republics of Greece, and the mighty commonwealth of Rome; which are now with rapid progression ruining Great Britain, so late the first Kingdom of Europe, must eventually ruin every State where their deleterious influence in suffered to prevail." "Need I add," Tudor concluded, "that luxury, corruption, and standing armies are those destructive efficients?"[27] According to the Whig tenets of history, once a people succumbed to the love of luxury, they quickly became corrupt and sold their liberty for the bribes offered by ambitious tyrants. After corrupting the people, such rulers fortified their power by establishing standing armies. And since the initial link in the chain of anti-British reasoning was the attack on the soldiery, the argument was truly forged.

The patriot orators tirelessly recounted the trilogy of British decline with particular emphasis on the corrosive influence of luxury. "Luxury," Tudor proclaimed, "is ever the foe of independence, for at the same time that it creates artificial wants, it precludes the means of satisfying them." The peoples' representatives become accustomed to the ministerial bribe, he continued, and they begin to "consider public virtue as a public jest."[28] This sentiment became such a commonplace in Revolutionary rhetoric that participants at patriotic ceremonies routinely drank a toast that "luxury never prevail to the prejudice of Morality and National Dignity."[29] American patriots did not view the corrupting influence of luxury as merely a topic for popular applause. John Adams confided in his diary that "when elegance, luxury, and effeminancy begin to be established," the government becomes "totally corrupted" and "folly, vice, and villany [sic] will be cherished and supported." The British officials in Massachusetts, Adams thought, illustrated this principle perfectly.[30] In writing to Samual Adams, a Maryland patriot confessed that he considered "Luxury & Venality" as the greatest threats to American liberty.[31]

Luxury had so infected England by 1776, the Reverend Mr. Thacher reported, that her Parliament was "totally corrupted," her ministry "arbitrary and tyrannical," and her people "the most contemptible of animals." Only a revolution could save Britain—but "what hopes can Britons entertain of effecting a revolution?" Tudor asked. Bribes to Parliament legalized the King's actions and his standing army enforced his tyranny.

"An army of forty thousand," Tudor noted, could abort "in their birth every effort of patriotism to restore the constitution."[32] Thacher asserted that English kings bribed opponents "to sacrifice the rights of the people" by awarding them positions in the army and the ministry. Worst of all, Thomas Dawes explained, the British army "over-awed" the people, influenced elections, and "carried distraction and massacre into different parts of her Empire."[33]

The cycle of luxury, corruption, and standing armies included an inherent acceleration that both hastened the decline of England and threatened the rest of the Empire. Dr. Thomas Welsh, formerly an army surgeon, warned of the civic diseases that spread from a standing army. Soldiers unoccupied with military combat, the doctor explained, pursued "the objects of pleasure with the same zeal they engaged in the toils and enterprizes of the field." Worse yet, the idle troops infected civilians with a love of luxury, and "the voice of riot" replaced "the sound of the hammer, and the midnight revel" succeeded "the vigils of labour."[34] With disapproving tones, Mr. Thacher reminded his listeners how the British troops both corrupted the morals of Boston's youths and, at the same time, encouraged the "habit of tame submission."

When Revolutionary spokesmen turned to British sexual vices, they abandoned logical consistency describing their enemies as predisposed both to heterosexual rape and homosexual seduction. Perhaps reflecting their Puritan heritage, the New England audiences grouped diverse sins under one heading as they contemplated their ungodly oppressors. None objected to the orators' incongruous image of the British soldier as an effeminate despoiler of American womanhood; indeed, many joined John Adams in extravagantly praising such speeches. John Hancock cited the Britons' dual capacity for sexual corruption, denouncing them for betraying "our youth of one sex into extravagance and effeminancy, and the other to infamy and ruin." He acknowledged regretfully "that even the noblest, fairest part of the lower creation" had not entirely escaped "the cursed snare." Hancock recalled that formerly virtue had "erected its throne within the female breast," but in 1774 he found some girls "whose youth and inexperience have rendered them a prey to wretches."[35] Peter Thacher joined Hancock in grieving that "the officers of the British army" sought only "to captivate the softer sex and triumph over their virtue."[36] Worse still, the British taught American boys a fondness for false finery and unmanly behavior. Jonathan Austin recalled "that effeminacy and those grosser vices too indelicate to be mentioned in this place stalk'd like demons" through the cities of America. "Witness O Boston," he wailed "for ye were too well acquainted with the melancholy truth!"[37] The speakers' fascination with luxury and effeminacy helped to gloss over Americans' sense of cultural inferiority to the British. The Americans' roughness and lack of polish became a virtue.

The inevitability of the cycle of civilization made its application to England certain and its danger to America fearful. Greece, Rome, and "the empires of the East" had all fallen in the same pattern.[38] "Habitual indulgence," "effeminancy," and "sloth," introduced corruption into once powerful nations and gave rise to standing armies. In accordance with the incontrovertible law of politics, the nation's army soon turned inward, "knawing as it were, upon its own bowels."[39] While Revolutionary spokesmen enjoyed portraying "hapless Britain" as she stood "tottering o'er the gulch of annihilation," they also viewed her as a sober example—"a spectacle too serious for the amusement of the beholder."[40] Boston's leading patriots did not regard these assertions of British decline as mere propaganda ploys; in private as well as public letters Josiah Quincy, Samuel Adams, and John Adams expressed shock "that Englishmen—that boasted race of freemen" had sold their liberties "to the highest Bidder." "It is amazing—it is incredible," Quincy marveled, how the British people had "sunk in abject submission."[41]

It was the shock of the destruction of the British ethos that had to be dealt with by patriot rhetoric. Although association with the soldiery did its work in tarnishing the image of the mother country, the English could not be turned with ease from their heroic stance of the past by either the orators or their audiences. The growing disloyalty, and the painful incongruities it brought to the surface, had to be harmonized somehow with the whole past set of associations and symbols. A series of tactics emerged: the ministry as apart from the nation was singled out for blame and, most importantly, the basic values were re-asserted while it was alleged that those who honored them lived in the colonies and not at the seat of empire. Joseph Warren assured his listeners in 1772, for example, that "surely the British nation will not suffer the reputation of their justice, and their honor, to be sported away by a capricious ministry." Two years later the Reverend Mr. Jonathan Parsons prayed with his congregation in Newburyport, Massachusetts, that the King exhibit "humanity and goodness" by putting "a speedy and final end to all those measures of depotism, invented and propagated by a corrupt ministry."[42]

Before the Declaration of Independence, patriots enjoyed the presumptuous notion that America's resistance to tyranny would not only protect liberty on this side of the water, but would "secure the Liberties of the whole British Empire." In this way, the patriots reasoned, Americans could "gradually teach our Brethern at home [England] to reform the many Evils that have crept into the Constitution."[43] This conviction was reinforced by America's friends in London who reported that Lord Chatham believed American defiance of ministerial tyranny to be "the last hope of liberty for England."[44] Then, when the American example went unheeded, patriot speakers concluded that England had been infected with "a mortal distemper" and liberty had abandoned her shores.[45] Hichborn

and Austin marked the St. George's Field "massacre" in 1768 as the date on which British liberty died, while George Richards Minot placed the date of death earlier and pointed to the Stamp Act as "the first spectre which shot from its tomb."[46] The growing conviction among Americans that England had declined into corruption and tyranny, that she had forever lost liberty, gave a new moral imperative to independence and persuaded patriot leaders like William Lee that "America must work her own salvation."[47] A continued connection with Great Britain, they feared, would permit the disease of tyranny to take hold in the new world.[48]

With the repeated attacks on the British ethos, a new notion of the English national character was taking shape. The English people had abandoned their heritage and, thus, the entire old network of affections and perceptions was coming undone. Former countrymen were now "unworthy descendants of illustrious ancestors," and "degenerate sons of great forefathers!"[49] And the nation that in past times was seen as "home" could now be characterized by the Reverend Mr. Thacher as "a great tame beast which fetches and carries for any minister who pleases to employ it."[50] England had abandoned the goddess liberty, leaving her to the protection of America, and this gave "a radical new meaning" to the patriots' arguments. As Bernard Bailyn observed, this conviction transformed patriot appeals "from constitutional arguments to expressions of a world regenerative creed."[51]

The lurid accounts of British infamy, the rabid denunciation of once loved Britain, no doubt were exaggerated and more intense than the detached observer might, in cooler reflection, feel to be warranted. But there was little cool detachment in America in the 1770s. In 1774 Daniel Leonard, the tory Attorney General of Massachusetts-Bay, expressed his fear that from such rhetoric a "disaffection to Great Britain" was infused in the American people—"the subtle poison Stole through all the veins and arteries [and] contaminated the blood."[52] But rhetoric does not merely persuade; it defines and describes reality. Rhetoric both shapes and reflects perceptions. The events in the growing conflict with Britain had to be interpreted and understood. Americans could hardly be expected to see hostile British actions as the necessary chastisement of an unruly child by a firm parent; the child had long outgrown the rod. Lord Mansfield might call upon his peers to exert all the power of the mother country against the "offspring" who "are grown too big and too resolute to obey the parent," but Americans were coming to see the exercise of that power as an effort to forge the chains of slavery.[53] Whether the historian may judge British policy as harsh or as benign, as calculated or inept, the fact is that the colonists *saw* their former protectors in a new light and discovered them to be vile, degenerate, and unworthy of liberty.

But what was to take Britain's place? If one was not British, what was he? The rhetoric, as it influenced perceptions of the English, had *at the same time* to influence the colonist's perception of himself. The sustained

21

attack on the British ethos was an important component of the rhetoric of the Revolution—a rhetoric that created Americans out of Englishmen—but Revolutionary writers and speakers endeavored not only to destroy but to build, to replace the British ethos with a new vision, a positive American ethos. By defining the American national character, Revolutionary spokesmen not only allowed Americans to acquire a new identity, they also helped to create the foundations of the American ideology.

Looking back on the Revolution in his later years, John Adams commented on this process to Thomas Jefferson: "What do we mean by the Revolution? The War? That was no part of the Revolution; it was only an effect and consequence of it."[54] Adams recognized that American independence involved a fundamental restructuring of self-concepts. "*The real American Revolution,*" he insisted, was the "*radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people.*" As Adams reviewed the birth of the United States in a letter to a Baltimore newspaper editor he stressed two themes: the alienation of Americans' "habitual affection for England" and the amazing unity achieved among the diverse peoples in British North America. The thirteen colonies, he noted, "were composed of so many different nations, their customs, manners, and habits had so little resemblance . . . that to unite them in the same principles in theory and the same system of action, was certainly a very difficult enterprise." To achieve this unity, patriot spokesmen had to persuade Americans not only to cast off their ties with Great Britain, but to regard themselves as a single people—to embrace a new national character, a unique American ethos. British colonists had to learn to think of themselves as American citizens; their dual loyalties to England and their individual colonies had to be replaced with an exclusive commitment to a new nation. Adams regarded "the complete accomplishment" of this unity in so short a time, as "a singular example in the history of mankind." Recalling the triumph of American nationalism, he marveled that "thirteen clocks were made to strike together—a perfection of mechanism, which no artist had ever before effected."[55]

The rhetoric of the American Revolution played a central role in the creation of a new American ethos, for it fortified allegiance to the belief in a particularly American destiny and national character and to the notions of America as the home of liberty and the example to the world. Above all, this rhetoric proclaimed Americans as God's chosen people. The seeds of these ideas can be traced back to the sermons of the early colonial settlement period. After they flowered in the rhetoric of the American Revolution, they continued to grow in the patriotic oratory of nineteenth-century America. Such concepts, when firmly established and regularly reaffirmed, could withstand a conflict with the older values of loyalty to the King, respect for the constituted British authority, and pride in being English.

The American ethos did not suddenly emerge; it had been forming dur-

ing the previous twenty years, creating a dual identity for British Americans. Studies of the symbolism of early American nationalism indicate that in the mid-eighteenth century Americans developed a consciousness of their community as distinct—if not separate—from the British. Through a traditional historical analysis, Paul A. Varg identified the colonial celebrations of the conquest of Quebec in 1759 as the moment when "the name 'Americans' became something more than a geographical expression."[56] In a quantitative analysis of self-referent word symbols in colonial newspapers, political scientist Richard Merritt discovered that "in no year after 1755 did less than 50 percent of these symbols identify the land and the people as American rather than British."[57] Another study of symbolic figures by art historian E. McClung Fleming suggests a close correlation between the rise of American word symbols and graphic symbols. Fleming discovered that American symbolic figures, such as the Indian Princess and American Liberty, first appeared in 1755 and were widely accepted by 1766.[58]

Until 1775 and 1776 most Americans were able to reconcile their dual loyalties to England and America, but with independence they had to reorganize their self-concepts. As a consequence, the question of the American identity became one of the major themes in the early American "literature of persuasion."[59] How did Americans perceive themselves? What did they feel united them? What destiny did they imagine for their young country? What characteristics did they regard as uniquely theirs? By attempting to resolve these questions, Revolutionary spokesmen helped to unify Americans and create a new community of minds.

Revolutionary speakers and writers redefined America, tranforming it from a part of the glorious British Empire into an independent empire, freed from the grasp of declining England and soon to become the hope of mankind. Three distinct tributaries flowed together to form a particularly American stream; these three ideas would define and enliven the new American ideology. First, America was "the promised land"; second, it was a "rising empire"; and third, America was "the home of liberty." As these three ideas merged into an ideology, they acquired a power which no one of them could attain alone. Each aspect of the ideology implied the other two aspects; the tripartite form became so deeply entrenched in American political rhetoric that the very notion of liberty became wedded to the idea of empire—an empire of freedom reserved by God for His chosen people. From the first idea Americans gained divine support, from the second came unlimited promise, and from the third they acquired a world mission. Although this ideology must, in the final analysis, be regarded as a single, unified form, it would be well to consider each of the three ideas in turn, sampling from the vast body of rhetoric that produced them.

Discovering the evolving image which Americans of the Revolutionary era had of themselves poses no small difficulty, for the great majority of

Americans left no direct record of their own beliefs. In order to discover the thoughts of inarticulate Americans, scholars have turned to those who spoke for them, the orators, the poets, the newspaper writers. These sources may prove to be faithful guides to the convictions of a society, because the good speaker and essayist and the popular poet knows his audience; "he knows the values to which they adhere and to what extent, and the arguments they accept and those they question."[60] The student of the American Revolution may confidently accept the judgments of numerous important and minor orators and writers when they frequently use the same images, metaphors, and symbols—particularly if speakers on opposite sides of the Revolutionary controversy appeal to the same beliefs.

If the English had offended God by their love of luxury and disregard for the Sabbath, patriot orators could point to one hundred and fifty years during which Providence had blessed His pilgrims in America. John Hancock evoked the familiar image of Americans as God's chosen people when he urged his Boston audience in 1774 to pray, to act, to fight "and even die for the prosperity of our Jerusalem."[61] Seven years later, Thomas Dawes, a twenty-two year old Boston lawyer who enjoyed a reputation for writing polite literature and exercising a "lively imagination," described America as "another promised land" which had been "chosen out and foster'd by the almighty hand." One Revolutionary versifier explained that God "snatch'd the Saints from Pharoh's impious hand,/and bid his chosen seek his distant land."[62] These appeals echoed some of the earliest words in American public discourse—those spoken by John Cotton in his farewell sermon to John Winthrop and the band of Puritans bound for Massachusetts Bay in 1630. Cotton preached from the text: *"Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israell, and I will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their owne and move no more."*[63] One hundred and forty-five years later, the Reverend Oliver Noble addressed the citizens of Newburyport, Massachusetts and asked: "Are not the people of America also God's covenant people? And is not the Lord of Hosts their covenant God?" In his sermon Reverend Noble assured his flock that "God is the same yesterday, today and forever"; they might expect his protection just as the Puritans received it, for "he is as able and as ready to appear for his distressed covenant people now, as then; and they may hope for, and expect salvation in the same way."[64]

The experience of the early Puritans served as proof that Americans were under God's special protection. John Cotton had reassured the departing flock that when God "is our planter, he becomes our husbandman." Turning to scripture, Cotton asked: *"if he plant us, who shall plucke us up?"*[65] Who indeed, responded orators like James Lovell, Joseph Warren, and the Reverend Mr. Noble. Each orator reminded his listeners of their "pious and venerable forefathers," whom God had protected and enabled "to turn a barren wilderness into a fruitful field." In the patriots' version of American history, Britain played no con-

structive role. Colonists established God's plantations "at an infinite expense of toil and blood," but "assisted by no earthy power."[66] Joseph Warren, whom tories denounced as "a rascally Patriot" with a *"puritanic whine,"* asserted that the English Crown had viewed the pilgrims' struggles with indifference. Only after the colonists had defeated the Indians and "the fields began to wave with riper harvests" did Britain turn to America—and then only as a source of revenue.[67]

Not surprisingly, speakers applied the notion that God guided American destiny to the immediate Revolutionary situation. In 1774 John Hancock urged Boston citizens to "play the men for our God," to exert all their means in America's defense, and to "humbly commit our righteous cause to the great Lord of the universe." A year later Mr. Noble prayed with his Newburyport congregation "that God will arise and Plead our cause and his Own against the oppressor—for the cause of liberty is the cause of God."[68] Such statements were not insincere appeals or intemperate expressions of overzealous partisans; they reflected the belief that America would become a new Jerusalem. The idea of divine support for the Revolution rang from most dissenting pulpits. Only Anglican ministers openly repudiated the claim, and to members of dissenting congregations these ministers of the Church of England "ranked about on a par with the Pope and the Devil."[69] In public addresses and private letters Americans attributed the new found unity among American colonies to "the agency of the supreme being," and reassured themselves that it was "not likely or probable" that God would "revoke the grant he has made of this land to his church."[70] By the end of the war, even some former Royal officials like Governor Thomas Pownall spoke with awe about "this wonderful Revolution," attributing its success to "the visible interposition of Divine Providence, superceeding the ordinary course of human affairs."[71]

Revolutionary orators often argued that God revealed his support of America in specific acts of the war. Not only did He cause patriots to rise up and warn their countrymen of British violations of their rights, but "divine providence" rescued American armies from disaster, sending George Washington "supplies of warlike stores when in great want of them" and preventing "the enemy from acting with vigour against us, when we were prepared but feebly to resist them."[72] In 1782 George Richards Minot, a young Boston lawyer "very ready at the Pen," professed that even accounting for individual heroism in battle, there appeared in America's victories "peculiar marks of more than human assistance."[73] Speakers from Charleston, New York, Hartford, and Providence joined the Boston orators in proclaiming God as the commanding general of the American cause. The "brave Generals" and "patriotic Heros," one New York minister explained, were raised up by God "to be his glorious instruments, to fulfil [sic] scripture-prophecies, in favor of his church and American liberty."[74]

The idea of the promised land strengthened a second idea, the image of America as a rising empire. The term "empire"—surely an unlikely appellation for the thirteen colonies scattered along the eastern seaboard of North America—allowed Americans to view their independent nation not as withering away in isolation from European culture, but as forging ahead as the vanguard of progress in the world. To Revolutionary spokesmen the notion of *empire* did not necessarily connote imperial power or arbitrary rule. In particular, an American empire implied not a military dictatorship like the Roman Empire, but a rebirth of the Greek and Roman republics. America would become "the fairest copy of such great originals!"[75] In 1776 Thomas Paine proclaimed: "Britain and America are now distinct empires." Britain had become an "empire of depotism," but Paine foresaw America as an empire of freedom, a "theatre where human nature will *soon* receive its greatest military—civil, and literary honors."[76] This emerging empire would not rob other peoples' freedoms, but would protect American liberties from foreign encroachments. When he eulogized General Richard Montgomery, Hugh Brackenridge suggested a direct relationship between the rise of a strong America and the defeat of the English. The ghost of Montgomery, Brackenridge claimed, watched over the war and anticipated "the pleasing view of the certain overthrow of the British arms, and the final glory of an Independent Empire in America."[77]

In Revolutionary orations the idea of a rising American empire complemented, rather than contradicted, the idea of America as the land of liberty. In 1776 Peter Thacher perceived no conflict of purposes when he urged his listeners to form and defend "a free and extensive empire." He exhorted Americans to repel the British—to decide forever the question of "whether the rising empire of America shall be an empire of slaves or of freemen."[78] In 1781 Thomas Dawes claimed to see "the expressive leaves of Fate thrown wide," revealing that Providence would bring "a smiling day" when the strength of empire would secure Americans' freedoms,

> When these blest States, another promis'd land,
> Chosen out and foster'd by the almighty hand,
> Supreme shall rise—their crowded shores shall be
> The fix'd abodes of Empire and of Liberty.[79]

In the eighteenth century, to talk of nationalism was to talk of empire. In 1783 when Thomas Welsh exulted that America had "set up her own name among the empires," he was not looking forward to an American monarch, but was proclaiming that Ameirca had come of age. Significantly, Welsh viewed the loose confederation of American states as an empire—an empire without arbitrary power, without supreme rule, without a dictator or king.[80]

The idea of a rising American empire was closely interwoven with the idea of a promised land and orators often cited God's support of America

to demonstrate the glorious destiny of the new nation. Bishop George Berkeley's popular notion that civilization—empire, learning, and culture—moved ever westward synchronized well with the notion of Americans as God's chosen people and helped to create a conviction that the promised land would prosper materially as well as spiritually. In 1630 John Cotton promised the Puritans that God's "owne plantation shall prosper & flourish."[81] A century and a half later, the youthful orator Jonathan Mason informed his listeners that "the important prophecy is nearly accomplished." Mason observed that "the glory of this western hemisphere is already announced, and she is summoned to her seat among the nations."[82] During the 150 years between Cotton's sermon and Mason's oration, the concept of America's mission had undergone a marvelous transformation—instead of viewing themselves as a separatist band of God's elect on an errand into the wilderness, Americans celebrated their divine destiny as the foremost empire of the world. Patriotic poetasters predicted that "when Europe's glories shall be whelm'd in dust . . . our proud fleets the naval wreath shall wear." That day, another versifier professed, was not far away. In his "Song for the 5th of March," he continued:

> A Ray of Bright Glory now Beams from afar
> Blest dawn of an EMPIRE to rise;
> The American Ensign now sparkles a Star,
> Which shall shortly flame wide thro' the Skies.[83]

Like the new nation, the image of American destiny was not fully formed by the end of the Revolutionary War. As orators and poets struggled to define the emerging empire, they seized upon two themes: the growth of agriculture and commerce, and the blossoming of the arts and sciences. In a poem written for the 1772 Boston Massacre Commemoration, James Allen, a young man esteemed for his "literary genius," united both themes in a single stanza:

> Here golden Ceres cloaths th' autumned plain,
> And art's fair Empress holds her new domain,
> Here angel Science spreads her lucid wing,
> And hark, how sweet the new-born Muses sing;
> Here generous Commerce spreads her liberal hand,
> And scatters foreign blessings round the land.[84]

George Richards Minot and Thomas Welsh announced that America would become wealthy from the "traffic of the world"—from commerce carried "from her copious horn" by "her snow white navies."[85] Newspaper poets prophesied "the future glory of America" and schoolboy debaters invited their audiences to behold "the largest and happiest empire on earth, the land of liberty, the seat of science, the refuge of religion."[86]

Fourth of July celebrants drank toasts that "agriculture and Commerce," and the "arts and Sciences [might] flourish in America." Philip Freneau, Timothy Dwight, and Joel Barlow proclaimed in their poems that "a glorious empire rises, bright and new!"—a land that was both "the queen of the world and child of the skies."[87] In Philadelphia Francis Hopkinson informed the American Philosophical Society that "the eyes of Europe" were "turned towards America." The world looked to America, Hopkinson continued, "as a country that may be a great nursery of arts and sciences—as a country affording an extensive field of improvement in agriculture, natural history, and other branches of useful knowledge."[88] In South Carolina Dr. David Ramsay assured a Fourth of July assembly that "the arts and sciences" would blossom in America. "They require a fresh soil," he counseled, "and always flourish most in new countries." According to Ramsay, the free governments of the new nation would become "nurseries of rhetoric, criticism, and the arts," and soon America would abound the "poets, orators, critics and historians equal to the most celebrated of the ancient commonwealths of Greece and Italy." Ramsay foresaw a unique role for "the art of public speaking" in America, because "eloquence is the child of a free state." Democracy gave immense importance to "arguments enforced by the arts of persuasion," and he predicted that "the poorest school boy" would study "with increasing ardor, from the prospect, that in a few years, he may, by his improved abilities, direct the determinations of public bodies, on subjects of the most stupendous consequence."[89]

The dream of a glorious American empire captivated not only patriots, but also colonists who were neutral and even some loyalists. The most articulate of those who supported neither the patriots nor the British forces was Michel-Guillaume Jean De Crévecoeur, a French-American who returned to Europe rather than endure the war. In an essay written before independence, Crévecoeur described "this mighty continent," characterizing America as a land where "individuals of all nations melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great change in the world." Summarizing the American dream in a single sentence, Crévecoeur announced: "Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigour, and industry, which began long since in the east; they will finish the great circle."[90]

Some loyalists shared this vision of American destiny, but for them this destiny was an extension of the British Empire. The Reverend Mr. William Smith, whose College of Philadelphia was closed during the war because of his British sympathies, explained that "the design of colonizing" had not been "to found a *new* empire, but to extend the *old*." Nevertheless, Smith shared the optimism of his favorite student, Francis Hopkinson. "When I review the history of the world, and look on the progress of Knowledge, Freedom, Arts, and Science," Mr. Smith confessed, "I cannot but be strongly persuaded that Heaven has yet glo-

rious purposes to serve thro' America."[91] A younger loyalist, when hard pressed to oppose independence during a college disputation, appealed to the same public conviction that America would produce "masterly geniuses, brighter than which Greece, Italy, or Britain can boast few." War, he warned, would nip America's budding cultural promise and stunt its growth with "the groans of slaughter."[92] By 1783 the idea of the rising American empire even captured the imagination of Thomas Pownall, the former Royal Governor of Massachusetts-Bay Province. Governor Pownall expressed his determination "to come & see it (if so please God) before I dye." To view "the commencement of a great empire at its first foundation," he declared, was "an object more worthy the contemplation of a speculating philosopher than can be or ever could be seen in any other country."[93] Thus, Americans of varied political persuasions could abandon their British heritage. Men who had once gloried in the name "Englishman" could now claim the far grander title of "American."

The ideas of a promised land and a rising empire, though powerful in themselves, formed but part of the new American ethos proclaimed by Revolutionary spokesmen. Integrally tied to the concept of an empire in the west was the idea of America as the new home of liberty. In accordance with the polar strategy of Revolutionary rhetors, the abstract concept of liberty had to be personified through concrete imagery. In the abstract, liberty might exist in both the old world or the new, but when expressed metaphorically as *the* tree of liberty, or *the* goddess of liberty, it could exist only in one place and not in the other. In order to portray America as the home of liberty, patriot spokesmen seized upon three closely related symbols—the asylum of liberty, the goddess of liberty, and the liberty tree. With each symbol Americans tried to give a more concrete form to their concept of America's purpose, and with each they chronicled the flight of liberty from the old world to the new.[94]

The asylum metaphor became the most popular and complex symbol of American liberty during the Revolution. While springing from the Puritan experience, the idea of an asylum for liberty proved to be particularly malleable in the orations and essays of patriots. Speaking on the deck of the *Arbella* in the middle of the Atlantic ocean, John Winthrop had reminded his followers that they would find in America an asylum for true religion, and that their goals were to preserve themselves "from the Common corruptions of the evill world," to serve the Lord, and to work out their salvation "under the power and purity of his holy ordinances."[95] As Revolutionary speakers recounted Puritan motivations, however, they portrayed the Pilgrim fathers as seeking political as well as religious freedom. By the time James Lovell spoke at the first Boston Massacre Commemoration in 1771, this flight of religious purists had been reinterpreted as a search for "full English Liberty." In a speech delivered only three months before he died on Bunker Hill, Joseph Warren characterized the New England Puritans as "resolved never to wear the yoke of despo-

tism." He explained that the Pilgrims had perceived that "the European world, through indolence and cowardice, [was] falling prey to tyranny," so they "bravely threw themselves upon the bosom of the ocean; determined to find a place in which they might enjoy their freedom, or perish in the glorious attempt."[96] In 1775 Reverend Oliver Noble announced that "our fathers fled into this wilderness, in an arbitrary reign; and from the iron hand of oppression at home, that they might enjoy civil and religious liberty."[97] Three years later, John Lathrop treated his congregation to a fiery sermon in which he proclaimed that North America had been reserved by God "as the last retreat of a virtuous few" who would never yield their liberties. In 1772 Joseph Warren warned that to fail to fight for liberty would make the struggles of the Puritans in vain.[98] Tories recognized the power of such appeals and complained bitterly that "this perpetual incantation kept the people in continual alarm."[99]

Even though Revolutionary spokesmen had attributed a love of civil liberty to Puritans who too often possessed only a limited concept of religious liberty, the analogy between the forefathers and the founding fathers remained imperfect. American orators and essayists still had to transform the elitist asylum of the Puritan imagination into an asylum for all mankind. Here orators used the symbol of asylum in three ways. First, they testified to the need for an asylum for liberty; then they used the symbol alternatively to represent both an asylum for the abstract concept of liberty and an asylum for all people seeking liberty. That corruption and vice had overwhelmed England and made her unfit for liberty became an article of faith among Revolutionary writers and speakers. Reverend Samuel West posed no more than a rhetorical question in 1776 when he asked the Massachusetts House of Representatives: "But do we not find that both religion and liberty seem to be expiring and gasping for life in the other continent, where then can they find the harbour, or place of refuge but in this?" In 1777 Benjamin Hichborn echoed West's conviction, declaring the American states to be "the only column of free air in both hemispheres." At the next year's Massacre Commemoration, Reverend Lathrop joined in chorus, telling his listeners: "Should we cast an eye over the Kingdoms of the world at the present day, we shall discover the effects of oppression and violence, on every quarter of the globe."[100] But perhaps the most vivid description of world-wide tyranny fell from the pen of Thomas Paine. He seemed to capture the broad sweep of history in a series of short, compelling sentences of *Common Sense*: "O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind."[101]

Some speakers employed the metaphor of asylum only in discussing the concept of liberty, thus by-passing the dilemma of opening the land of

God's chosen people to everyone seeking liberty. The Reverend Mr. Samuel Sherwood restricted political freedom to those practicing pure religion. He proclaimed that "where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"; this spirit, he continued, "has been plentifully poured out, not only in the New-England colonies, but likewise on his Episcopalian bretheren in the Southern Provinces." General Charles Lee spoke of liberty as distinct from people when he claimed that if liberty did not find asylum in America, it would "be obliterated from the face of the globe."[102] This concern for liberty as a mere abstraction stopped short of inviting the non-elect to share in America's promise. More frequently, however, Americans spoke of their land as an asylum for both liberty and her lovers; in fact, Crévecoeur defined an American as one who had accepted her asylum—one "received in the broad lap of our great *Alma Mater*." In his first Boston Massacre oration, Joseph Warren hoped that America might become both the "land of liberty" and "the asylum of the oppressed." Jonathan Mason may well have read Warren's speech when he prepared his oration eight years later, for he used exactly the same words.[103] In Newburyport the Reverend Mr. Oliver Noble charged that the oppressive policies of the British Ministry were motivated by a fear that America would become an asylum of liberty. "Well did despots at home [England] know," Noble explained, "that if Charming Freedom spread her olive branches in America, emigrations from them to us would soon go near to depopulate their own country; weakening them and strengthening us until America became invincible."[104]

Thomas Paine, Samuel Adams, and the members of the Continental Congress declared that "the portals of the temple we have raised to freedom shall be thrown wide, as an asylum to mankind." The members of Congress saw a reciprocal relationship between the rising empire and the opening of an asylum for liberty. America, they resolved, would "receive to her bosom and comfort and cheer the oppressed, the miserable and the poor of every nation and every clime." The gates of liberty, they predicted, would be swung open through "the enterprise of extending commerce" which would "wave her friendly flag over the billows of the remotest regions," and "collect and bear to her shores all the various productions of the earth . . . by which human life and human manners are polished and adorned."[105]

But if America was to become the asylum for liberty, how was her new occupant to be visualized? Revolutionary orators had to create an appealing fugitive to represent the abstract concept of liberty. For this purpose the "Goddess Liberty" served them well. It became a second major symbol in the idea of America as the land of liberty and was always portrayed as a refugee in an evil world.[106] Thomas Dawes described her as wandering over the globe, abandoning each empire in succession. When tyrants rose to power in Rome, he explained, "Liberty heard and trembled—considered herself an outcast and has on many times since travelled

up and down the world, forlorn, forsaken, majestic in rags." The old republics, while once "the most perfect seats of her residence," had cast her out, Dawes reported; and if America did not retain her, she would remain homeless "until the millenium [sic]."[107] Joseph Warren viewed the Pilgrim fathers as "her zealous votaries," and claimed that "when the blasting frowns of tyranny drove her from public view, they clasped her in their arms, they cherished her in their generous bosoms, they brought her safe over the rough ocean, and fixed her seat in this their dreary wilderness." Having "nursed her infant age" and sacrificed their blood to protect "her altar," Warren proclaimed, the Puritans bequeathed "this glorious legacy" to all Americans.[108] Warren was unique among Revolutionary orators in portraying the goddess of liberty as a passive passenger on the *Arbella;* Peter Thacher, Thomas Dawes, and Jonathan Austin each characterized her as an independent traveler seeking asylum, not in 1630, but during the 1770s and 1780s. "She invites us to accept her blessings," the Reverend Mr. Thacher announced; "she wishes to find an asylum in the wilds of America." Austin explained that the goddess had become "disgusted by scenes of cruelty and oppression." She "left her ancient alters," he confided, "and is now hovering to fix her last residence in America."[109]

Despite differing accounts of precisely how the goddess had "found her way to these remote shores," Revolutionary spokesmen all proclaimed the new world as her "American Throne." In Philadelphia Francis Hopkinson rejoiced that "Fair Freedom" who previously "in Britain her throne erected . . . forsook the base nation, and fixed on our mountains, a more honor'd station."[110] The female image of liberty complemented those anti-British appeals which focused on the metaphor of England raping America. Peter Thacher urged Americans to protect the goddess and "resist the attacks of her impudent ravishers," while Warren warned them not to "suffer your liberties to be ravished from you by lawless force, or cajoled away by flattery and fraud." Thomas Dawes gave the most impassioned plea to defend the goddess, imploring his countrymen: "cherish the divine inhabitant! O let her not return to the courts above with a story that shall fire the heavens against us—that she had blessings for us; but that we were not prepared to receive them."[111]

The goddess of liberty provided an elegant, but ethereal occupant for the American asylum, and Americans sought a less metaphysical symbol of their liberty. When the Boston patriots hung an effigy of stamp agent Andrew Oliver from the town's great elm on August 4, 1765, the most concrete symbol of American liberty was born.[112] The liberty tree metaphor fit perfectly with the rhetoric of the American ethos. Like the original Puritan colonies which became the promised land, the tree of liberty was planted in the American soil and grew deep roots; like the rising American empire, it would flourish and grow to majesty. Only a year after Boston christened its tree, Reverend William Smith of the College of Philadelphia

lectured his commencement audience on the transplantation of civil liberty and Protestant religion. In America, he declared, "they have got firm root, and are flourishing into immense growth." During his talk on the role of education in promoting freedom, Smith warned that "we durst not divert the streams of Learning from their sacred course. Our country, nay all America, had a right to demand that those streams should be directed pure along to water the goodly TREE OF LIBERTY, nor ever be suffered to cherish any foul weed, that would shoak [sic] its growth."[113]

Boston radicals had anticipated Thomas Jefferson's dictum that "the tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants"; in 1770 they placed the body of an eleven year old boy killed by a customs informer under the Tree of Liberty. A sign placed next to the child's body announced: "the Wicked shall not pass unpunished." In a massive funeral procession which set the pattern for the funerals of the Boston Massacre victims two weeks later, the Sons of Liberty carried the boy's body from the Liberty Tree to the cemetery.[114] Surprisingly, Boston orators made few references to the liberty tree, although the imagery of "transplanting" liberty appeared in some speeches. During the worst years of the war, Jonathan Austin found comfort in the conviction that American liberty was "a plant transplanted from the gardens of heaven." He assured his listeners that "its divine parent will still cherish it and in spite of opposition it will flourish, it will live forever."[115] After the Boston Massacre Commemorations were converted into Fourth of July celebrations, the liberty tree emerged as an explicit patriotic symbol. In 1783 John Warren congratulated his audience upon having "planted the *stately Tree of Liberty* and lived to see it flourish." It grew, he reminded them, because *"its roots were watered with your blood!"* When Jonathan L. Austin delivered his oration in 1786, he also observed that "the flourishing plant of AMERICAN LIBERTY" had been "largely sprinkled with the blood of her favorite sons . . . those WORTHIES who nobly fell, while rearing its infant growth."[116]

The symbols of asylum, goddess, and tree soon came to represent a unified concept of America as the land of liberty. It fell to Thomas Paine, the foremost rhetorician of revolution, to crystallize the connections between these three symbols. In his poem "The Liberty Tree," Paine joined the goddess and tree metaphors and predicted that the asylum of liberty would become a nation of freemen. The poem, first published in Paine's ***Pennsylvania Magazine*** in June of 1775, appeared in American newspapers from Philadelphia to New Hampshire, proclaiming:

> In a chariot of light from the regions of day
> The Goddess of Liberty came;
> Ten thousand celestials directed the way
> And hither conducted the dame.
> A fair budding branch from the gardens above

Where millions with millions agree,
She brought in her hand as a pledge of her love
And the plant she named *Liberty Tree*.

The celestial exotic struck deep in the ground,
Like a native it flourished and bore;
The fame of its fruit drew the nations around,
To seek out this peaceful shore.
Unmindful of names or distinctions they came,
For freemen like brothers agree:
With one spirit endured, they one friendship pursued,
And their temple was *Liberty Tree*.[117]

America, the asylum for liberty, had won the goddess of liberty who in turn planted a liberty tree which would cast its shade on the oppressed of the world.

The ideas of the promised land, the rising empire, and the home of Liberty combined to persuade Americans that they had a moral obligation to stand forth as the example to the world. Joseph Warren summarized the new American ethos in 1772 as he prayed with his overflow audience in the Old South Church of Boston: "May we ever be a people favored of God. May our land be the land of Liberty, the seat of virtue, the asylum of the oppressed, a name and a praise in the whole world, until the last shock of time shall bury the empires of the world in one common undistinguished ruin."[118] No longer considering themselves colonial rustics, Americans took pride in their conviction that "the eyes of the Good and great in every clime" were upon them. In Boston Jonathan Mason spoke of "an attentive world" watching the Revolutionary struggle, while Francis Hopkinson told his Philadelphia audience that the old world looked to the new for inspiration, and Governor John Rutledge announced to the legislature of South Carolina that "the eyes of *Europe*, nay, of the whole world, are on America."[119] Such flattering notions invited smugness, even self-righteousness, from Americans; but being an example also brought heavy responsibilities. John Winthrop had warned his Puritan band in 1630: "Wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a hill. The eies of all people are uppon Us, soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our god in this work wee have undertaken, and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a by-word through the world. . . . Wee shall shame the faces of many of god's worthy servants, and cause theire prayers to be turned into Curses upon us till wee be consumed out of the good land whither wee are goeing."[120] A century and a half later, Americans experienced the same tension between their glorious potential and their awesome responsibility.

Revolutionary spokesmen who described American destiny with rolling periods, faltered when they tried to describe their example to the world. Yet, this much was clear: Americans were "a new character of people

which no history describes"; they would create the best model of government; they would strike out "in the cause of humankind" and extend "the embraces of our country to the universe."[121] The notion of a new national character captured imaginations in the old world as well as the new, and Americans soon heard Europeans speculating that "it is perhaps in America that the human race is to be recreated, that it is to adopt a new and sublime legislation, that it is to perfect the arts and sciences, that it is to recreate the nations of antiquity." One French liberal announced: "America is the asylum of liberty in which Grecian souls, strong and noble souls, will rise up, or to which they will migrate, and this great example granted to the universe will prove what Man can do when he adds to knowledge a courageous heart."[122] This rhetoric of the emerging American ideology, while less radical and violent than the attacks on the British ethos, nevertheless had a profoundly revolutionary impact in making Americans out of Englishmen.[123]

The new American ethos was not completely formed by the time of the Treaty of Paris; the war years had been its gestation period, and the Articles of Confederation its birth. A mere infant in 1783, the national character would grow to young manhood during the next half century, nursed by frontier stump speakers and Fourth of July orators. Americans had cast off the images of the past and now welcomed new national symbols. As the Revolutionary orators denounced the vile English and wept over the fall of the British Empire, they offered their listeners a new American ideal. Never able to describe that ideal precisely, patriot speakers and writers struggled to answer Crévecouer's enduring question: "What then is the American, this new man?"[124]

Through the rhetoric of their Revolution Americans created for themselves a national ethos and a national mission. They welded together three defining ideas into an ideology which set the new land apart. They came to believe that America had been chosen by God as the land promised to His people, that it was destined to become a great republican empire, and that it was endowed with the unique and sacred trust of providing the home for liberty. This ideology has had a significant influence on our rhetoric ever since. The ideology provided a set of expectations through which Americans would filter and interpret contemporary events. Thus, the triumph of the rag-tag militia over the powerful British military was seen by Americans not as an accident of European power politics, but as a sign of God's favor. Moreover, the ideology provided Americans with a kind of internal logic that allowed them to decide their national policies. Hence, if America was to be the new home of the goddess of liberty, then Americans had to secure her throne by establishing a central government. If America was to be the example to the world, could she also continue slavery? The enormous power and potential of the American ideology lay precisely in these dual functions: *to interpret* reality and *to direct* national policy. If the past does indeed exert a compelling force on the present and

future, if it is a determinant in shaping our responses to immediate events, then the past itself may well be a powerful rhetorical instrument.[125] The instrument shaped by the Revolution's rhetoric—the ideology—may not have served as a continuing revolutionary one; it did, nevertheless, form a kind of screen through which issues could be filtered, and thus served to continue the American Revolution by institutionalizing its ideals and providing a frame of reference for contemplated action. The chapters that follow will examine this thesis, exploring certain ways in which the ideology that grew out of Revolutionary rhetoric influenced the perceptions of the American people.

CHAPTER I

NOTES

[1]Max Savelle, "Nationalism and Other Loyalties in the American Revolution," *American Historical Review*, 67 (July 1962), 914. On the issue of dual loyalties, see Savelle, pp. 901-923; and John W. Blassingame, "American Nationalism and Other Loyalties in the Southern Colonies," *Journal of Southern History*, 34 (Feb. 1968), 50-75.

[2]Benjamin Church, *An Oration Delivered March 5th, 1773, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1773), p. 12, hereafter cited as Church, *Oration*, 1773; Boston Committee of Correspondence to Benjamin Franklin, March 31, 1774, Massachusetts MSS, Massachusetts Historical Society; and James Lovell to Josiah Quincy, Jr., Dec. 9, 1774, Josiah Quincy, Jr. MSS, Massachusetts Historical Society. Church's public use of a British identity is particularly significant, for as a secret agent for the English, his success depended upon maintaining a radical pose in Boston. Because of its almost universal usage, the imagery of England as parent of America posed special problems to Revolutionary spokesmen; for discussions of this metaphor see Stephen E. Lucas, "Rhetoric and the Coming of the Revolution in Philadelphia, 1765-1776: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Protest and Revolution," Diss. Pennsylvania State 1973, pp. 223-226; Kurt W. Ritter, "The Myth-Making Functions of the Rhetoric of the American Revolution: Francis Hopkinson as a Case Study," *Today's Speech*, 23 (Spring 1975), 25-31; and J. Vernon Jensen, "British Voices on the Eve of the American Revolution: Trapped by the Family Metaphor," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 63 (Feb. 1977), 43-50.

[3]Peter Thacher to Samuel Adams, May 19, 1778, Box 4, Samuel Adams Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

[4]Chaim Perelman, "The New Rhetoric: A Theory of Practical Reasoning," *The Great Ideas Today 1970* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1970), p. 279.

[5]John Adams to Jedidiah Morse, Jan. 5, 1816, *Works of John Adams*, ed. Charles Francis Adams (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1856), X, 204.

[6]Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), pp. 49-51; also see pp. 20-21, 49-55. For a detailed discussion of the epideictic tradition in American discourse from 1776 to 1800, see Gordon E. Bigelow, *Rhetoric and American Poetry in the Early National Period* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1960), pp. 48-59.

[7]Salem (Mass.) *Essex Gazette*, March 5, 1771, p. 1.

[8]Joseph Warren, *An Oration Delivered March 5th, 1772 at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770* (Boston: Edes and Fleet, 1778), p. 13, hereafter cited as Warren, *Oration*, 1772; Church, *Oration*, 1773, p. 18; John Hancock, *An Oration Delivered March 5, 1774 at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770*, reprint edition (Newport, R.I.: S. Southwick, 1774), p. 11, hereafter cited as Hancock, *Oration*, 1774; and the *Boston Gazette*, March 2, 1772, p. 2.

[9]In 1775 Church was exposed as a traitor and convicted of passing military secrets to the British. Church, *Oration*, 1773, p. 17; also see Hancock, *Oration*, 1774, p. 12; Benjamin Hichborn, *An Oration Delivered March 5th, 1777, at the Request of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770* (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1777), p. 11, hereafter cited as Hichborn, *Oration*, 1777; Jonathan William Austin, *An Oration Delivered March 5th 1778, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770*, (Boston: Edes and Fleet, 1778), p. 10, hereafter cited as Austin, *Oration*, 1778; and John Lathrop, *A Discourse Preached on March the Fifth, 1778* (Boston: Draper and Folsom, 1778), p. 11, hereafter cited as Lathrop, *A Discourse*, 1778.

[10]"A Monumental Inscription of the Fifth of March," Broadside, 1772, Vol. IV, Emmet Collection (No. 2086), Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

[11]William Tudor, *An Oration Delivered March 5th, 1779, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770* (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1779), p. 20, hereafter cited as Tudor, *Oration*, 1779; and Hichborn, *Oration*, 1777, p. 11. Also see Austin, *Oration*, 1778, p. 10; and Lathrop, *A Discourse*, 1778, p. 12.

[12]Hancock, *Oration*, 1774, pp. 17, 8.

[13]Warren, *Oration*, 1772, pp. 12-13.

[14]Hichborn, *Oration*, 1777, p. 15.

[15]Austin, *Oration*, 1778, p. 12.

[16]Austin, *Oration*, 1778, p. 12; and Lathrop, *A Discourse*, 1778, pp. 12-13.

[17]Austin, *Oration*, 1778, p. 12.

[18]Lathrop, *A Discourse*, 1778, pp. 12-13, 14, 18.

[19]*Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

[20]For a discussion of the transfer of "devil status" from the French to the British, see John C. Heald's essay, "Apocalyptic Rhetoric: Agents of Anti-Christ from the French to the British," *Today's Speech*, 23 (Spring 1975), 33-37.

[21]George Richards Minot, *An Oration Delivered March 5th, 1782 at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770* (Boston: B. Edes and Sons, 1782), pp. 9-10, hereafter cited as Minot, *Oration*, 1782; and Peter Thacher, *An Oration Delivered at Watertown March 5, 1776; to Commemorate the Bloody Massacre at Boston Perpetrated March 5, 1770* (Watertown, Mass.: Benjamin Edes, 1776), p. 13, hereafter cited as Thacher, *Oration*, 1776.

[22]Austin, *Oration*, 1778, pp. 11-12; also see Lathrop, *A Discourse*, 1778, pp. 12-13, 18; and Thacher, *Oration*, 1776, p. 9.

[23]Thacher, *Oration*, 1776, p. 9; Lathrop, *A Discourse*, 1778, pp. 14-15; also see Hichborn, *Oration*, 1777, p. 13.

[24]Lathrop, *A Discourse*, 1778, pp. 14-15.

[25]Abigail Adams to John Adams, Aug. 1, 1776, *Adams Family Correspondence*, ed. L. H. Butterfield, *et al.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), II, 73; Jonathan Mason, Jr., *An Oration Delivered March 6, 1780, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770* (Boston: John Gill, 1780), p. 12, hereafter cited as Mason, *Oration*, 1780; and Austin, *Oration*, 1778, p. 12.

[26]See Minot, *Oration*, 1782, p. 6; the *Boston Gazette* of March 4, 1783 advertised a pamphlet entitled, "A Dialogue Between the DEVIL and GEORGE 3rd Tyrant of Britain," and warned the readers of "the profane language in the dialogue . . . between the vilest Being in the other world, and the worst in this" (p. 3).

[27]Tudor, *Oration*, 1779, pp. 6-7.

[28]*Ibid.*, pp. 7, 15.

[29]Boston *Continental Journal*, July 10, 1783, p. 3.

[30]John Adams, *Works of John Adams*, II, 250 (undated diary entry *circa* 1770).

[31]Samuel Purviance to Sam Adams, Sept. 26, 1775, Box 3, Samuel Adams MSS.

[32]Thacher, *Oration*, 1776, p. 13; Tudor, *Oration*, 1779, pp. 15-16.

[33]Thacher, *Oration*, 1776, p. 8; Thomas Dawes, *An Oration Delivered*

March 5th, 1781 at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770 (Boston: Thomas and John Fleet, 1781), pp. 15-16, cited hereafter as Dawes, *Oration*, 1781.

[34]Thomas Welsh, *An Oration Delivered March 5th, 1783, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770* (Boston: John Gill, 1783), pp. 8-9, cited hereafter as Welsh, *Oration*, 1783.

[35]Thacher, *Oration*, 1776, pp. 7, 8-9; Hancock, *Oration*, 1774, pp. 8-9.

[36]Thacher, *Oration*, 1776, p. 13.

[37]Austin, *Oration*, 1778, p. 6.

[38]Mason, *Oration*, 1780, p. 22; Hichborn, *Oration*, 1777, pp. 12-13; and Tudor, *Oration*, 1779, pp. 6, 8.

[39]Minot, *Oration*, 1782, pp. 13-14; Joseph Warren, *An Oration Delivered March 6, 1775, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770*, reprint edition (Newport, R.I.: S. Southwick, 1775), pp. 16-17.

[40]Tudor, *Oration*, 1779, p. 15; and Minot, *Oration*, 1782, pp. 10-11, 6.

[41]Josiah Quincy to Mrs. Quincy, Nov. 24, 1774, in Josiah Quincy, *Memoir of the Life of Josiah Quincy, Jun.* (Boston: Cummings, Hilliard, & Company, 1825), p. 247; Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, April 9, 1773, *Writings of Samuel Adams*, ed. Harry Alonzo Cushing (New York: Putnam's, 1907), III, 21; and [John Adams], Letters from "Novanglus," *Boston Gazette*, Jan. 30, 1775, pp. 1, 4; and Feb. 13, 1775, pp. 2-4.

[42]Warren, *Oration*, 1772, p. 15; Jonathan Parsons, *Freedom From Civil and Ecclesiastical Slavery, the Purpose of Christ: A Discourse Offered to A Numerous Assembly on March the Fifth, 1774 at the Presbyterian Meeting House, in Newbury-port* (Newburyport, Mass: I. Thomas and H. W. Tinges, 1774), p. 18, cited hereafter as Parsons, *Freedom*, 1774.

[43]Samuel Purviance to Samuel Adams, Sept. 26, 1775.

[44]Stephen Sayer [?] to Samuel Adams, Jan. 12, 1775, Box 2, Samuel Adams MSS. Sayer repeated this sentiment in a letter written three months later, but added that he feared it was "now too late for the Wisdom of Chatham to save this . . . country"; Sayer to Samuel Adams, April 4, 1775, Box 2, Samuel Adams MSS.

[45]Oliver Noble, *Some Strictures Upon the Sacred Story Recorded in the Book of Esther, Shewing the Power and Oppression of State Ministers Tending to the Ruin and Destruction of God's People—And the Remarkable Interpositions of Divine Providence, in Favour of the Oppressed; in a Discourse Delivered at Newbury-port, North Meeting House, March 8th, 1775, in Commemoration of the Massacre at Boston, March the Fifth, 1770* (Newburyport, Mass.: E. Lunt and H. W. Tinges, 1775), p. 30, cited hereafter as Noble, *Some Strictures*, 1775.

[46]Hichborn, *Oration*, 1777, p. 9; Austin, *Oration*, 1778, p. 9; Minot, *Oration*, 1782, p. 7.

[47]"Mentor" [William Lee] to Samuel Adams, May 14, 1774, Box 2, Samuel Adams MSS.

[48]See, for example, James Bowdoin to Samuel Adams, Dec. 9, 1775, Box 3, Samuel Adams MSS.

[49]Tudor, *Oration*, 1779, pp. 16-17, 18.

[50]Thacher, *Oration*, 1776, p. 7.

[51]Bernard Bailyn, excerpt from *Pamphlets of the American Revolution*, reprinted in Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., ed., *The American Revolution: The Critical Issues* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), p. 101.

[52]"Massachusettensis" [Daniel Leonard], *Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Post-Boy*, Dec. 26, 1774, pp. 1-2.

[53]William Murray, Lord Mansfield, "On the Right of Taxing America," House of Lords, Feb. 13, 1766, in Chauncey A. Goodrich, *Select British Eloquence* (1852; rpt. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), p. 151.

[54]John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, Aug. 24, 1815, *Works of John Adams*, X, 172.

[55]John Adams to Hezekiah Niles, Feb. 13, 1818, *Works of John Adams*, X, 282-283 (Adams' emphasis).

[56]Paul A. Varg, "The Advent of Nationalism, 1758-1776," *American Quarterly*, 16 (Summer 1964), 170.

[57]Richard L. Merritt, "The Emergence of American Nationalism: A Quantitative Approach," in *The American Experience: Approaches to the Study of the United States*, ed. Hennig Cohen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), p. 424; also see Merritt's *Symbols of American Community, 1735-1775* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), especially pp. 112-141.

[58]E. McClung Fleming, "Symbols of the United States: From Indian Queen to Uncle Sam," in *Frontiers of American Culture*, eds. Ray B. Browne, Richard H. Crowder, Virgil L. Lokke, and William T. Stafford (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Studies, 1968), pp. 3-4.

[59]Edwin H. Cady, ed., *Literature of the Early Republic*, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969), pp. 3-4.

[60]Chaim Perelman, "The New Rhetoric," in *The Prospect of Rhetoric*, eds. Lloyd Bitzer and Edwin Black (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 120.

[61]Hancock, *Oration*, 1774, p. 18.

[62]James Spear Loring, *The Hundred Boston Orators Appointed by the Municipal Authorities and Other Public Bodies from 1770 to 1852* (Boston: Hobart & Robbins, 1852), p. 141; Dawes, *Oration*, 1781, p. 23; and James Allen, *The Poem Which the Committee of the Town of Boston Voted Unanimously to Be Published With the Last Oration; With Observations Relating Thereto; Together With Some Very Pertinent Extracts From an Ingenious Composition Never Yet Published* (Boston: E. Russell, 1772), pp. 7-8, hereafter cited as Allen, *The Poem*, 1772. This poem was to have been published with Joseph Warren's oration, but

Boston's radicals suppressed the piece owing to doubts about Allen's patriotism. It was later published by his friends.

[63]John Cotton, "God's Promise to his Plantations [London, 1630]," *Old South Leaflets, No. 53* (Boston: Old South Association, n.d.), p. 4.

[64]Noble, *Some Strictures*, 1775, p. 20; also see Samuel West, *A Sermon Preached Before the Honorable Council and the Honorable House of Representatives, of the Colony of the Massachusett-Bay, in New-England, May 29, 1776. Being the Anniversary for the Election of the Honorable Council For the Colony* (Boston: John Gill, 1776), p. 56, hereafter cited as West, *Sermon*, 1776; and Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, pp. 32, 140-141.

[65]Cotton, "God's Promise to his Plantations," p. 12.

[66]Warren, *Oration*, 1772, p. 18; Noble, *Some Strictures*, 1775, p. 21; Warren, *Oration*, 1775, p. 9; and James Lovell, *An Oration Delivered April 2d, 1771, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; To Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770* (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1771), p. 14, hereafter cited as Lovell, *Oration*, 1771.

[67]Henry Hulton to Robert Nicholson, June 20, 1775, in Wallace Brown, ed., "An Englishman Views the American Revolution: The Letters of Henry Hulton, 1769-1776," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 36 (Feb. 1973), 147; Thomas Bolton, "An Oration Delivered from the Coffeehouse by Doctor Thomas Bolton," Miscellaneous Bound MSS, Massachusetts Historical Society; Warren, *Oration*, 1775, pp. 8-9. On the removal of the British from the history of the "French-Indian War," see Richard W. Van Alstyne, *The Genesis of American Nationalism* (Waltham, Mass.: Blaisdell, 1970), p. 99; note that even the name of the war conceals the British participation.

[68]Hancock, *Oration*, 1774, p. 19; and Noble, *Some Strictures*, 1775, p. 20.

[69]Harry P. Kerr, "The Character of Political Sermons Preached at the Time of the American Revolution," Diss. Cornell 1962, pp. 33-34.

[70]Samuel Sherwood, *The Church's Flight into the Wilderness: An Address on the Times. Containing Some Very Interesting and Important Observations on Scripture Prophesies: Shewing that Sundry of Them Plainly Relate to Great Britain and the American Colonies; and are Fulfilling in the Present Day. Delivered on a Public Occasion, January 17, 1776* (New York: S. London, 1776), p. 49, hereafter cited as Sherwood, *The Church's Flight*, 1776; and Samuel Adams to "A Southern Friend," March 12, 1775 (transcripts), Vol. 3, Samuel Adams MSS. Also see Samuel Nye to Joseph Nye, Sept. 4, 1776, Lafayette MSS, Lilly Library, Indiana University.

[71]Thomas Pownall to James Bowdoin, Feb. 28, 1783, "Bowdoin and Temple Papers," Massachusetts Historical Society *Collections*, 7th ser., 6 (1907), 3.

[72]John Lathrop, *A Discourse*, 1778, pp. 16-17.

[73]William Tudor to the Justices of the Superior Court of Massachusetts, Sept. 15, 1780, William Cushing MSS, Massachusetts Historical Society; and Minot, *Oration*, 1782, p. 10.

[74]Sherwood, *The Church's Flight*, 1776, p. 4; also see John Rutledge, "Speech to Both Houses [of the South Carolina Legislature, 1776]," in *The Colonial Idiom*, eds. David Potter and Gordon L. Thomas (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), p. 327; and John C. Rainbolt, "Americans' Initial View of Their Revolution's Significance for Other Peoples, 1776-1788," *The Historian*, 35 (May 1973), 420.

[75]Minot, *Oration*, 1782, p. 15.

[76]Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* [3rd ed.] . . . *and a Dialogue Between the Ghost of General Montgomery Just Arrived From the Elysian Fields; and an American Delegate, in a Wood Near Philadelphia: On the Grand Subject of American Independency* (Philadelphia: R. Bell, 1776), pp. 15-16; this reference is to the *Dialogue* which has independent pagination.

[77][Hugh Brackenridge], *The Death of General Montgomery at the Seige of Quebec: A Tragedy* (Philadelphia: Robert Bell, 1777), p. 2.

[78]Thacher, *Oration*, 1776, p. 14; also see Mason, *Oration*, 1780, p. 20; and Lathrop, *A Discourse*, 1778, p. 16.

[79]Dawes, *Oration*, 1781, p. 23.

[80]Welsh, *Oration*, 1783, p. 17.

[81]Cotton, "God's Promise to His Plantations," p. 15.

[82]Mason, *Oration*, 1780, p. 20.

[83]Allen, *The Poem*, 1772, p. 10; "A Song for the 5th of March," *Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Post-Boy*, March 7, 1774, p. 2.

[84]Allen, *The Poem*, 1772, p. 8.

[85]Minot, *Oration*, 1782, p. 15; and Welsh, *Oration*, 1783, p. 18.

[86]"Poet's Corner: A Prophecy of the Future Glory of America," *Connecticut Courant*, March 8, 1774, p. 4; [James Mitchell Varnum and William Williams], "A Disputation on 'Whether British America Can Under Present Circumstances Consistent with Good Policy, Affect to Become an Independent State'," in *The Colonial Idiom*, p. 24, cited hereafter as [Varnum and Williams], "A Disputation," 1769. This debate took place in 1769 at Rhode Island College (now Brown University).

[87]Boston *Continental Journal*, July 10, 1783, p. 3; "America Independent," in *The Poems of Philip Freneau*, ed. Fred Lewis Pattee (Princeton, N.J.: The University Library, 1902), I, 282; and Timothy Dwight, "Columbia," in *The Connecticut Wits*, ed. Vernon L. Parrington (1926; rpt. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1969), p. 273.

[88]Francis Hopkinson, "An Address to the American Philosophical Society, [January 1784]," in *The Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings of Francis Hopkinson, Esq.* (Philadelphia: T. Dobson, 1792), I, 360-361.

[89]David Ramsay, *An Oration on the Advantages of American Independence, Spoken Before a Public Assembly of the Inhabitants of Charlestown, in South-Carolina, on the Second Anniversary of that Glorious Era* (Charlestown, S.C.: John Wells, 1778), pp. 6-7, 4.

[90][Michael-Guillaume Jean de Crévecoeur] J. Hector St. John, *Letters from an American Farmer; Describing Certain Provincial Situations, Manners and Customs, not Generally Known; And Conveying Some Idea of the Late and Present Interior Circumstances of the British Colonies in North America. Written for the Information of a Friend in England* (London: Thomas Davis, 1782), p. 52.

[91]William Smith, "An Eulogium," in John Morgan, *et al., Four Dissertations on the Reciprocal Advantages of a Perpetual Union Between Great-Britain and her American Colonies. Written for Mr. Sargent's Prize-Medal. To Which (By Desire) is Prefixed, An Eulogium, Spoken at the Delivery of the Medal at the Public Commencement in the College of Philadelphia, May 20th, 1776* (Philadelphia: William and Thomas Bradford, 1776), p. 6, 11.

[92][Varnum and Williams], "A Disputation," 1769, p. 18.

[93]Thomas Pownall to James Bowdoin, Feb. 28, 1783, p. 4.

[94]Our research on the idea of America as the home of liberty has been aided considerably by three earlier studies: Cecil D. Eby, "America as Asylum: A Dual Image," *American Quarterly*, 14 (Fall 1963), 483-489; John C. Rainbolt, "Americans' Initial View of Their Revolution's Significance For Other Peoples, 1776-1788," *The Historian* (May 1973), 418-433; and Robert P. Hay, "The Liberty Tree: A Symbol for American Patriots," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 55 (Dec. 1969), 414-424. Paul C. Nagel has studied the symbols of the American *union* in a manner similar to the present investigation of America as the "home of liberty"; see his *One Nation Indivisible: The Union in American Thought, 1776-1861* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), especially pp. 210-231.

[95]John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity [1630]," *Old South Leaflets, No. 207* (Boston: Old South Association, n.d.), p. 18.

[96]Lovell, *Oration*, 1771, p. 7; Warren, *Oration*, 1775, p. 6; also see Lovell, *Oration*, 1771, p. 13; and Parsons, *Freedom*, 1774, p. 11.

[97]Noble, *Some Strictures*, 1775, p. 21; also see Warren, *Oration*, 1772, p. 7.

[98]Warren, *Oration*, 1772, pp. 17-18; also see Dawes, *Oration*, 1781, p. 19.

[99][Daniel Leonard], Letter from "Massachusettensis," *Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Post-Boy*, Dec. 19, 1774, p. 2

[100]West, *Sermon*, 1776, pp. 57-58; Hichborn, *Oration*, 1777, p. 15; Lathrop, *A Discourse*, 1778, p. 9; also see Samuel Webster, *A Sermon Preached Before the Honorable Council and the Honorable House of*

43

Representatives of the State of Massachusetts-Bay in New-England, at Boston, May 28, 1777. Being the Anniversary for the Election of the Honorable Council (Boston: Edes & Gill, 1777), p. 26.

[101]Thomas Paine, *Common Sense; Addressed to the Inhabitants of America, on the Following Interesting Subjects. I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in General, With Concise Remarks on the English Constitution. II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession. III. Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs. IV. Of the Present Ability of America, with Some Miscellaneous Reflections* (Philadelphia: R. Bell, 1776), p. 60.

[102]Sherwood, *The Church's Flight*, 1776, pp. 5-6; and a letter "To the Citizens of Philadelphia" from "Anglus Americus" [Charles Lee] in the *Pennsylvania Journal*, June 29, 1774.

[103]Crèvecoeur, *Letters From an American Farmer*, p. 52; Warren, *Oration*, 1772, pp. 17-18; Mason, *Oration*, 1780, p. 23.

[104]Noble, *Some Strictures*, 1775, p. 26.

[105]Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, p. 39; [Samuel Adams], Letter from "An American" to the Earl of Carlisle, *et al.* in the Worcester *Massachusetts Spy*, July 16, 1778, reprinted in *The Writings of Samuel Adams*, ed. Harry Alonzo Cushing (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), IV, 29-30; Continental Congress, *Observations on the American Revolution Published According to a Resolution of Congress, by their Committee. For the Consideration of Those Who are Desirous of Comparing the Conduct of the Opposed Parties and the Several Consequences Which Have Grown From It.* (Philadelphia: Styner and Cist, 1779), p. 122.

[106]Lovell, *Oration*, 1771, p. 18; also see Mason, *Oration*, 1780, p. 19.

[107]Dawes, *Oration*, 1781, p. 7.

[108]Warren, *Oration*, 1772, pp. 16-17.

[109]Thacher, *Oration*, 1776, p. 14; Austin *Oration*, 1778, p. 14; also see Dawes, *Oration*, 1781, pp. 7-8.

[110]Dawes, *Oration*, 1781, p. 8; Warren, *Oration*, 1775, p. 18; and [Francis Hopkinson], a song from "Bob Jingle," first published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 4, 1778, p. 2, and reprinted in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, April 8, 1778, p. 4, and the *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, June 30, 1778, p. 210.

[111]Thacher, *Oration*, 1776, p. 14; Warren, *Oration*, 1772, p. 17; Dawes, *Oration*, 1781, pp. 7-8.

[112]Arthur M. Schlesinger, "Liberty Tree: A Genealogy," *New England Quarterly*, 25 (Dec. 1952), 437-438.

[113]William Smith, "An Eulogium," pp. 6, 11.

[114]Thomas Jefferson, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Albert Ellery Bergh (Washington: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1903), VI, 373; *Boston Gazette*, March 5, 1770, p. 2; and *Boston Evening Post*, March 5, 1770, p. 3.

[115]Church, *Oration*, 1773, p. 10; and Austin, *Oration*, 1778, p. 8. Note that Austin describes liberty as transplanted from heaven and thereby avoids the difficulty of explaining how a twig from the rotting tree of British liberty could be planted in America without carrying the disease of its parent. Others, including Thomas Paine, overcame this contradiction by planting the tree in America during the settlement period, before the British parent had become hopelessly corrupt. Bernard Bailyn summarizes this approach in his *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution:* "the transformation had been made from the undefiled branch of the nation, strong, healthy, brimming with the juices of liberty, and it had been placed in a soil perfect for its growth" (p. 83).

[116]John Warren, *An Oration Delivered July 4, 1783, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; in Celebration of the Anniversary of American Independence* (Boston: John Gill, 1783), p. 30; and Jonathan L. Austin, *An Oration Delivered July 4, 1786, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; in Celebration of the Anniversary of American Independence* (Boston: Peter Edes, 1786), p. 11.

[117][Thomas Paine], "The Liberty Tree," *Newport* [R.I.] *Mercury*, Sept. 11, 1775, p. 4; the poem was reprinted in the *Pennsylvania Ledger*, Aug. 12, 1775, p. 4; the Worcester *Massachusetts Spy or American Oracle of Liberty*, Sept. 6, 1775, p. 4; and the *Pennsylvania Evening-Post*, Sept. 16, 1775, p. 421.

[118]Warren, *Oration*, 1772, p. 18.

[119]Austin, *Oration*, 1778, p. 14; Mason, *Oration*, 1780, p. 21; Hopkinson, "An Address to the American Philosophical Society," p. 360; and Rutledge, "Speech to Both Houses," p. 327. Also see Thomas Jefferson to Richard Price, March 21, 1785, in the *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian P. Boyd, *et al.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), VIII, 53.

[120]Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity," p. 20.

[121]Lovell, *Oration*, 1771, pp. 18-19; Minot, *Oration*, 1782, pp. 12-13, 10; and Dawes, *Oration*, 1781, p. 22.

[122]Louis Sebastein Mercier, *De la Litterature et des Litterateurs* (Yverdon, 1778), p. 19, quoted in Durand Echeverria, *Mirage in the West: A History of the French Image of American Society to 1815* (1957; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, Inc. 1966), p. 77.

[123]Scholars continue to debate whether the American war for independence promoted a true social and economic revolution within the American states. See, for example, William H. Nelson's essay, "The Revolutionary Character of the American Revolution," *American Historical Review*, 70 (July 1965), 998-1014. Thirteen scholarly articles in this dispute are conveniently collected in *The American Revolution: How*

Revolutionary Was It? ed. George Athan Billias (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965).

[124]Crévecoeur, *Letters From an American Farmer*, p. 51.

[125]See Professor J. H. Plumb's provocative essays on the way men have used their knowledge and perception of the past to reinforce their political, social, and moral beliefs; *The Death of the Past* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971).

CHAPTER II

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

With the final frustration of British arms, political ties with the mother country were at last severed. Through the years of struggle the Revolutionary orators had created an independent American, who saw himself as uniquely blessed and viewed his new land as especially called to greatness. The spokesmen for revolution had justified the unprecedented experiment at self-government by erecting a tightly interwoven set of ideas that we have called an ideology. This ideology was essential not only in establishing but also in maintaining and strengthening the American ethos. As Lord Cornwallis sent his aide to hand over the General's sword to the victorious American rebels, the British regimental bands played "The World Turned Upside Down." And so it must have seemed to most of the people of the earth, used to the virtually untrammeled exercise of royal and aristocratic power. Traditional authority was knocked into a colonial cocked hat, and the actions of this new nation could be justified and judged only by the new set of standards it had made for itself.

The ideology once developed, the function of rhetoric then became one of reinforcing the declared values and applying the ideology to given contexts—both to rationalize and inspire. From the beginning and throughout American history the ideology was to perform a conservative function. The past, and the image of the new country that it had produced, were to become the foundation for the future. Americans liked to talk of their political adventure as an "experiment," and continued to pride themselves on their pragmatic spirit, so different from the factious rigidity of the European ideologue who grew up amidst the decay of kingly dominance. Nevertheless, Americans did have a basic set of ideas to inform their perceptions, and a deluge of oratory was devoted to using and interpreting those ideas as a means of preserving institutions and insuring political and social continuity.

A natural vehicle for carrying on this function was provided by the occasion marking the assumption and regular transfer of constitutional power. The new American ideology, to which the Revolution had given birth, was to be a major rhetorical staple of the Inaugural Addresses of Presidents. First, however, a pattern for the Inaugural Addresses themselves had to be

set. From the circumstances of the first inaugurals there emerged a rhetorical form. The settings in which the rhetoric took place, the events which preceded them, and the Presidents' responses to both those factors, resulted in epideictic addresses well suited as ideological conveyances.

On the morning of the 30th of April, 1789, the United States Senate debated the proper protocol to be followed in receiving the nation's first President. John Adams supposed that the newly-sworn Chief Executive would address the Congress, and much discussion over procedures ensued: Should the Senate, for example, sit or stand? British precedents were brought up. Mr. Lee informed the Senators that the Lords sat and the Commons stood during the speech from the throne; Mr. Izard, who had often observed Parliament, pointed out that such was the case because there were not seats enough for the Commons. Mr. Adams had often been to Parliament, too, but there were so many spectators he could not remember exactly how it was. For his part, Mr. Carrol declared that it should not make any difference how it was done in Great Britain. Without resolving the issue, the Senate then turned its attention to the proper way to receive the House of Representatives, but before this could be settled the Speaker and the Representatives were introduced and entered the chamber where they joined their fellow legislators in waiting an hour and ten minutes for the President.[1]

Finally, George Washington arrived and was seated between the Vice-President and the Speaker. Vice-President Adams next conducted the President to a balcony where Chancellor Livingston of New York administered the oath before the cheering crowds. The party returned to the Senate chamber where Congressmen, standing after all, heard the President's short address.[2]

Senator William Maclay of Pennsylvania observed that "this first of men had read off his address in the plainest manner."[3] The President's secretary, Tobias Lear, reported that Washington was "heard with eager and marked attention"; Fisher Ames noted: "it was a very touching scene. . . . His aspect grave, almost to sadness; his modesty, actually shaking; his voice deep, a little tremulous, and so low as to call for close attention"; in all, the performance "produced emotions of the most affecting kind upon the members."[4] Whatever else they might have thought, all would have agreed that the event was an important and solemn one, that influenced future addresses and the ceremony surrounding them. The Inauguration was clearly an "occasion"; it called for a rhetoric more stately than partisan, more ceremonial than deliberative.

Washington's second address was the briefest inaugural statement, little more than 130 words.[5] When, in 1797, it was John Adams' turn to take the oath, the new President felt so unwell and agitated after having spent a sleepless night that he feared he might faint and "was in great doubt whether to say anything or not besides repeating the oath."[6] He did, however, give his speech and the precedent was strengthened.

Four years later, after a harsh campaign and an unseemly electoral struggle in the House of Representatives with his own running mate, Thomas Jefferson firmly set the tone for Inaugural Addresses when he asserted that "every difference of opinion is not a difference of principal," and that "we are all Republicans, we are all Federalists."[7] The appearance of harmony was marred somewhat since the outgoing Federalist President and recently defeated candidate, John Adams, declined to attend the ceremony installing his successor. Nevertheless, the achievement of—or at least the expression of—unity above party was established as the standard for inaugural rhetoric. There was certainly to be no rhetoric of personal vindication, no scorn to be heaped on political enemies, no demands for concrete political and social action. Clearly, unity was paramount, revenge was excised, and the triumph proclaimed was to be the triumph of the American system of government. Such a form assured that ideology would dominate.

Certainly, by the time the fifth President of the United States took the oath of office on March 4, 1817, there had been established by "venerable example" the practice of explaining "the principles which would govern" the new Chief Executive's Administration.[8] These statements of principles rose above party differences and emphasized fundamental beliefs shared by nearly all Americans. As did James Monroe, so did all his successors honor the custom. In 1960 John Kennedy was to describe the event as "not a victory of a party, but a celebration of freedom."[9] The inaugural discourse, an aftermath of often-times fervid partisanship and bitter rivalry, was to become a traditional rhetorical form aimed at restoring harmony and reinforcing mutual values.

A principal rhetorical strategy that emerged in the addresses was one that emphasized the sanction of the past. For the ideology to be instrumental in conserving an American ethos, it had consistently to be related to the past out of which it grew. "Unity," with all its symbolic implications stemming from the concerted action of the disparate colonies, was the stated goal, and the language of unity became the language of continuity and continuity was furthered by rhetorical use of the ideology. The pressures of the moment can readily be seen exerting themselves in the addresses, but, even so, the effort was clearly made to translate the present into the enduring, to unify not only the factions of the day but the spirit of the nation with its own past. In such a situation the influence of fundamental ideas generated by the Revolution was felt. The past impelled the future; its sanction was to be sought and the force of its momentum to be maintained. The Inaugural Addresses institutionalized, even hallowed, the Revolutionary spirit, venerating the founding fathers and what they had created, worshipping the past as the doctrine which should direct national behavior and aspiration. This sanctified past was a touchstone; it became both the justification and the inspiration for the present.

Speakers chose language carefully to identify themselves as legitimate successors to the Revolution. And as the Revolution slipped into history, its passing was marked and the ideology began to be institutionalized. By 1821 James Monroe recognized that the leadership was shifting from those "whose names are so much more conspicuously identified with our Revolution," than was his, "and who contributed so preeminently to its success."[10] It was left to his successor, the sixth President of the United States, John Quincy Adams, to proclaim that the founding and consolidation of the new American republic was "the work of our forefathers."[11] Twelve years later President Van Buren announced the end of an era. He said in 1837: "Unlike all who have preceeded me, the Revolution that gave us existence as one people was achieved at the period of my birth; and whilst I contemplate with grateful reverence that memorable event, I feel that I belong to a later age and that I may not expect my countrymen to weigh my actions with the same kind and partial hand."[12] While none of the seven men who had held the office before Van Buren would have always described their countrymen as "kind and partial," none the less the Revolution became, by Van Buren's inauguration, most decidedly "the past."

Orators, then, were at pains to remind their audience of the Revolutionary past. "From the experience of the past," John Quincy Adams observed, "we derive instructive lessons for the future."[13] Upon taking the oath, the new Presidents were consistently eager to buttress their principles with the blessings of history. William Henry Harrison developed his long address with numerous examples from antiquity,[14] and he apparently would have included even more references to the Roman Republic had not Daniel Webster, who insisted upon helping the President-elect write the speech, intervened and disposed of "two Roman Emperors." The Whig orator, through his editing efforts, also "killed seventeen Roman proconsuls as dead as smelts."[15] Harrison, however, was an exception in his fondness for extended classical allusion. Most Presidents relied on the American past to justify and sanctify their proposed courses of action.

During the three decades before the Civil War the signs of strain on the bonds of union between the states were becoming apparent and alarming. National leaders seemed incapable of relaxing the tensions between the North and South, but nevertheless the presidential orators tried to combat sectionalism with an appeal to unity based on a common past. Martin Van Buren and Franklin Pierce afford two good examples. In the election of 1836 Martin Van Buren publicly declared that the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia without the approval of the slave-holding states "would violate the spirit of that compromise of interest which lies at the basis of our social compact." In his letter to North Carolinians apprehensive of his views on slavery, Van Buren assured them of his belief that abolition "could not be done without imminent peril, if not certain destruc-

tion, to the union of the States."[16] In his Inaugural Address President Van Buren extolled the "success that has attended our great experiment." But if the experiment was to continue to prosper, the old rules must apply. Since "the perpetuity of our institutions depends on ourselves," the maintenance of principles "upon which they were established" would enable them "to confer their benefits on countless generations yet to come."[17] Franklin Pierce, sixteen years later, when the gap had widened and hostilities intensified, maintained that the solution to problems would come through emulation of the compromising spirit of the founding fathers. "The founders of this Republic," he argued, "dealt with things as they were presented to them, in a spirit of self-sacrificing patriotism, and, as time has proved, with a comprehensive wisdom which it will always be safe for us to consult."[18] For Pierce, history was "replete with instruction,"[19] and it taught that the Federal government should "confine itself to the exercise of powers clearly granted by the Constitution."[20]

Between Van Buren and Pierce each new President appealed to the nonpartisan, non-sectional interests of Americans to save the union. William Henry Harrison reminded his listeners that "of all the great interests which appertain to our country, that of union . . . is by far the most important,"[21] and James Polk thought that even to contemplate the destruction of the "glorious Union" would be "moral treason."[22] Zachary Taylor relied on the "enlightened patriotism" of Congress to be conciliatory in order "to perpetuate that Union." This, he urged, "should be the paramount object of our hope and affections."[23] But, undoubtedly, Pierce's was the most impassioned panagyric:

> With the Union my best and dearest earthly hopes are entwined. Without it what are we individually or collectively? What becomes of the noblest field ever opened for the advancement of our race in religion, in government, in the arts, and in all that dignifies and adorns mankind? From that radiant constellation which both illumines our own way and points out to struggling nations their course, let but a single star be lost, and, if there be not utter darkness, the luster of the whole is dimmed. . . . It is with me an earnest and vital belief that as the Union has been the source, under Providence, of our prosperity to this time, so it is the surest pledge of a continuance of the blessings we have enjoyed, and which we are sacredly bound to transmit undiminished to our children.[24]

James Buchanan, speaking four years after Pierce, despaired over the slavery agitation and called on "every Union-loving man" to suppress it.[25] But it was left to Lincoln to pronounce the most striking allusion to the past as he called upon his fellow citizens to remember yesterday's common triumph and sacrifice: "The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."[26]

5i

The union, of course, was for a time shattered by civil war, and the darker forces of our nature surfaced. The Presidents' appeals to the past as a bulwark of unity ultimately failed to overcome competing interests and passions, but the basic strategy of exhorting their listeners to look to history as the fount of wisdom was considered a sound one.

The past was not the sole possession of the Presidents, and it could be argued that the sanction of Union was weakened not only by economic interests and political passions, but also by competing visions of the past. Others struggled to capture the roots of the American ideology. To the abolitionists, for example, the American past was a struggle for individual liberty over slavery; to them, our history was founded upon the words: "all men are created equal." Frederick Douglass reminded his audience in his 1852 Fourth of July oration that the ideals of the American Revolution were "saving principles"; but through slavery—"The great sin and shame of America!"—America had made herself "false to the past, false to the present, and . . . false to the future."[27] A Union with slavery, Douglass remarked on an earlier occasion, was an "unholy Union"—"a covenant with death, an agreement with hell." Secession, he argued, ought to be welcomed, for when it came "our land will rise up from an incubus; her brightness shall reflect against the sky and shall become the beacon light of liberty in the Western world. She shall then, indeed, become the 'land of the free and the home of the brave.' "[28] To the southern secessionist, on the other hand, America's past was the struggle of the colonies for liberty from a powerful and arbitrary central government. Speaking on Washington's birthday in 1862 in the shadow of a monument honoring the first President, Jefferson Davis proclaimed that the Confederacy would attempt "to perpetuate the principles of our Revolutionary fathers." The American experiment, he explained, "had been perverted" by the "Federal Executive." Secession was the only act which could allow southerners to be faithful to the Revolutionary patriots—"to show ourselves worthy of the inheritance bequeathed to us."[29]

Despite such competing visions of the past, the Inaugural Addresses of the United States served a central role in our national deliberations. Essentially epideictic in nature, such ceremonial discourse reinforced the value of national unity, functioning to "increase the intensity of adherance to certain values which might not be contested when considered on their own, but may nevertheless not prevail against other values that might come into conflict with them."[30] The struggle to control the past, thus, was also a struggle to control the perceptions of the present and to influence the shape of the future. Inaugural rhetoric reinforced the conservative nature of the American ideology by an argumentative chain that linked the nationalist past with present, and by stylistic choices that drenched current practice in colors of nationalism.

The new Presidents sought consistently to legitimize their cause by resorting to the authority of the past, to their interpretation of the past. As

Andrew Jackson saw it, his "sacred duty" was to preserve the Union, the dissolution of which would result in the "loss of liberty, of all good government, of peace, plenty, and happiness. . . ."[31] During the period preceding the Civil War, the Presidents sought to become guardians, even masters, of the ideology by standing as champions of the Union, the overriding symbol of all that was sacred to the American nation. As Polk maintained, he who would threaten the Union would "extinguish the fire of liberty."[32] The appeals to preserve the Union, held in the Inaugural Addresses to be fundamental and sanctified by the past, were the moral basis for implicit but clear arguments—such as Van Buren's that Congress should not abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, or as Polk's that the impending admission of Texas should not be attacked by sectional opponents, or as Buchanan's that abolitionist agitation should stop. It does not follow that all arguments resting on the authority of the past are similar; for example, Buchanan's cautions and strictures are certainly not those of Lincoln, yet both turn to the past as they call for the preservation of the Union. "The arbitrament of the sword" settled the immediate issue, but the spirit of the past was still considered a potent source of potential influence. While appeals to the past might not always succeed in guiding the present, Americans, nevertheless, continued to consult their national past in order to understand the present. In his Second Inaugural Address, Abraham Lincoln invoked the concept of America as God's promised land in order to explain the Civil War. Despite their favored treatment, Lincoln noted, Americans had offended God with the peculiar institution of slavery. "He gives to both North and South this terrible war," Lincoln explained, "as the woe due to those by whom the offense came."[33]

The Civil War did not alter the veneration of the past nor did it significantly change the rhetorical strategy. A survey of the post-war Inaugurals would show such veneration to be as potent as ever. Consider, for example, a sampling of addresses from Garfield to Eisenhower. After the "supreme trial" President Garfield said, "The Union emerged . . . purified and made stronger. . . ."[34] Indeed, the result of the war was seen as a vindication of the principles underlying the rhetoric, and consequently it reinforced the rhetorical approach. Garfield's successor, Grover Cleveland, imagined that we had survived as a nation because of our devotion to the principles "launched by the founders of the Republic and consecrated by their prayers and patriotic devotion."[35] Benjamin Harrison looked to the heroes of the Revolution for inspiration and guidance,[36] and William McKinley's optimism was shaped by historical example, for "the prophets of evil were not the builders of the Republic."[37] Theodore Roosevelt acknowledged that the problems of the new twentieth century were not the same as those faced by the founding fathers, but that the spirit in which the solutions were to be undertaken remained essentially unchanged. "We have faith," he exuberantly proclaimed, "that we shall not prove false to the memories of the men of the mighty past. They did their work. They left

us the splendid heritage we now enjoy."[38] And in a rare burst of metaphor Calvin Coolidge asserted, "We must frequently take our bearings from those fixed stars of our political firmament if we expect to hold a true course," adding that "if we examine carefully what we have done, we can determine the more accurately what we can do."[39] In his First Inaugural Address, General Dwight D. Eisenhower attributed the process of peaceful political change in America to "our dedication and devotion to the precepts of our founding documents."[40]

The dedication to the past led Presidents to argue that their own proposals were consistent with the spirit, the aspirations, and the principles of the American experience. Through direct analogy and stylistic and structural parallelism, the speakers sought to form the audience's perception of the present as an extension of the lauded and laudable past. Benjamin Harrison, for example, took a rather tortuous route to identify the protective tariff with the patriotism of the founders whose energies were "directed toward the duty of equipping the young Republic for the defense of its independence by making its people self-dependent." What was occurring at the end of the nineteenth century, Harrison argued, was a "revival . . . of the same patriotic interest in the preservation and development of domestic industries," and thus "it is not a departure but a return we have witnessed."[41] At the time of the dramatic and devastating crises of the thirties and early forties, Franklin Roosevelt called upon the past for support and inspiration. On that cold, troubled day in March 1933 when he took the oath, the new President asserted that "this great nation will endure as it has endured." Our lot was not as bad as that of those who had gone before: "Compared with the perils which our forefathers conquered because they believed and were not afraid, we have still much to be thankful for." It was "the spirit of the American pioneer" that was called for.[42] In his Second Inaugural Address President Roosevelt, re-elected in a stunning victory over Governor Alfred Landon of Kansas, used the past to legitimize the actions of his first administration. The Republican Platform of 1936 began with the alarming proclamation: "America is in peril." It was made clear that the peril resulted from "the New Deal Administration [which] has dishonored American traditions. . . ." The Republican Party invited all Americans "to join us in defense of American institutions."[43] Roosevelt, far from admitting to the violation of institutions in a time of emergency, argued that in the actions of the previous four years "we Americans were discovering no wholly new truth; we were writing a new chapter in our book of self-government." What was done had been true to our "historic instinct," since "the Constitution of 1787 did not make our democracy impotent," and we were able to react to the crisis without perverting democracy. The founding fathers, Roosevelt argued, had "established the Federal Government in order to promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to the American people. Today we evoke those same powers of government to achieve the same objectives."[44]

While history was used fundamentally in the Inaugural Addresses as a conservative bulwark, it was not always used to support similar policies. The rhetorical strategy of identification with the past was the same, but the ghosts of the fathers could be conjured up to support antithetical concepts: isolationism and internationalism, for example. In the wake of American rejection of the League of Nations following World War I, Warren Harding seemed to voice the sentiment of a nation longing for "normalcy." Extolling "the wisdom of the inherited policy of non-involvement in Old World affairs," Harding asserted that an America built "on the foundation laid by the inspired fathers, can be a party to no permanent military alliance. It can enter into no political commitments, nor assume any economic obligations which will subject our decisions to any other than our own authority."[45] Forty years later, with isolationism discredited and America totally committed to world leadership, John Kennedy told the American people that "the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe" and reminded them that "we are the heirs of that first revolution." It was precisely because of this "ancient heritage" that the new generation of Americans was "unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this Nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world."[46]

There can be little doubt that the past has had a strong hold on our collective imagination. Inaugural rhetoric, resulting as it does from an ordered ceremonial occasion, shaped by precedent and designed to emphasize continuity, is bound to reflect a sense of history. The rhetoric reinforces a particularly American self-perception—that this nation was founded on correct, even perfect, principles, and adherence to the founding dictates is the surest course. "The heart of every citizen must expand with joy when he reflects how near our government has approached to perfection," James Monroe proudly stated. He unquestionably believed, as did generations of Americans, "that in respect to it [the Government] we have no essential improvement to make."[47] It is quite evident that the past, certainly to the extent that the Inaugural Addresses reveal, lays a heavy hand on the present. If perfection was to be attained, purity and orthodoxy would move hand in hand to prevent deviation from original principles. The result of the American Revolution and the consolidation which followed it was a stable, orderly government. From our Revolutionary heritage, therefore, it was even possible to construct, as did Warren Harding, a repudiation of revolution itself. "If revolution insists upon overturning established order," he said in 1921, "let other people make the tragic experiment. There is no place for it in America." Were we to be so threatened, America would "unfurl the flag of law and order and renew our consecration."[48] There can be little argument that the revolutionary ancestors could be used to bolster established institutions. The conserva-

tives assuredly captured the ideology and attempted in the Inaugurals to harness its power.

Of course, the conservative function was not always to protect, unchanged, the *status quo*, as Franklin Roosevelt's use of the past to legitimize experimentation illustrates. Nor does the American inheritance prescribe the strict adherence to fixed policies. The contradictory international views of Harding and Kennedy, each fairly representative of his time, suggest that founding precepts are just flexible enough to support conflicting popular notions. Whether the past is used for good or evil, whether to legitimize change, sanction the *status quo*, or dignify reaction, it is a potentially moving force; the rhetoric of the new Presidents clearly points to a belief in its potency. FDR's Third Inaugural Address affords an excellent example of the rhetorical use of the march of history; the parallelism of style mirrors the parallel national development and national challenges that Roosevelt saw. As America was drawn more swiftly toward the vortex of world war, the President told Americans:

> On each national day of inauguration since 1789, the people have renewed their sense of dedication to the United States.
>
> In Washington's day the task of the people was to create and weld together a Nation.
>
> In Lincoln's day the task of the people was to preserve that Nation from destruction from within.
>
> In this day the task of the people is to save the Nation and its institutions from destruction from without.[49]

"The American people stand firm in the faith which has inspired this Nation from the beginning," Harry Truman said, and added, "from this faith we will not be moved."[50]

The faith was influenced by the past and, perhaps more importantly, by contemporary perceptions of the past. So while the conservative rhetoric of the Inaugural Addresses attempted generally to bring to bear the prestige of the past in attacking contemporary problems, it specifically employed and exploited the influential ideas that the discourse of the Revolution had generated. Thus, the cluster of ideas that we have called an ideology may be seen as a major resource for rhetorical invention—as the source of criteria ready to be adapted to fit the country's needs as the Presidents saw them.

Let us consider this thesis in the light of the ideology. It was the professed conviction of the Revolutionary leaders that God's special interest in North America was manifest: "No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than those of the United States."[51] George Washington's first address was deeply colored by the conviction that Americans were God's chosen people. He was sure that "every step by which they have advanced

to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency," and certainly the peaceful settlement of a new government, when compared with the way most governments were established, was deserving of "pious gratitude."[52] The new Constitution was, in a sense, legitimized by the Almighty. Washington would surely not be the last President to see divine intervention in the accomplishment of measures of which he approved.

That Americans were uniquely blessed was constantly and consistently reaffirmed by the Presidents. The Inaugural Addresses are not, nor are they expected to be, replete with "evidence" in the traditional sense. Instead, one of the means whereby general principles are supported in the speeches is through the effort to identify them with God's will. This is sometimes accomplished by the use of the example of history—the successful revolution—and sometimes merely by assertion. The Revolutionary Americans may be seen to have done their work well: God's favor finally became a given truth. John Adams believed that "an overruling Providence . . . had so signally protected the country from the first"[53]; and Thomas Jefferson resorted to a favorite Biblical allusion: he spoke of that "Being . . . who led our fathers, as Israel of old, from their native land and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessaries and comforts of life."[54] Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century the idea persisted in the Inaugural Addresses that God had particularly laid his hand on the new American nation. Both Madison and Monroe chose the word "conspicuous" to describe the nature of God's blessing.[55] John Quincy Adams spoke as his father did of an "overruling Providence" and was sure that " 'except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain.' "[56] And so it went with Jackson offering prayers to the Almighty Being "who has kept us in his hands from the infancy of our Republic to the present day,"[57] Van Buren hoping "for the sustaining support of an ever-watchful and beneficent Providence,"[58] William Henry Harrison looking to "that good Being . . . who watched over and prospered the labor of our fathers,"[59] Polk invoking the aid of the "Almighty Ruler of the Universe" in guarding "this Heaven-favored land,"[60] Taylor asking for "a continuance of the same protecting care which has led us from small beginnings to the eminence we this day occupy."[61] and Pierce expressing the wish "that the kind Providence which smiled upon our fathers may enable their children to preserve the blessing they have inherited."[62] And as the storm clouds gathered Buchanan beseeched the American people to lend their support in perpetuating "the richest political blessings which Heaven has ever bestowed upon any nation."[63]

Over and over the conviction was voiced that Americans were unique. God had smiled particularly upon us, resulting naturally in a system which would attain "the highest degree of perfection of which human institutions are capable."[64] By rhetorical extension, the belief in divine favoritism tended to support the conviction that what God had uniquely blessed was

uniquely good. He had "preserved to us institutions far exceeding in excellence those of any other people," Harrison said in 1841.[65] President Buchanan was confident that since Providence had made possible "the most perfect form of government and union ever devised by man," Providence would not suffer it to perish.[66] And even with secession a reality, Lincoln still adhered to the belief that difficulties could be adjusted through a "firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land."[67]

The Civil War was a profoundly shattering national experience. Abraham Lincoln observed ruefully that "the Almighty has His own purposes," and that the terrible scourge of war brought, as the Bible said it would, "woe to that man by whom the offense cometh."[68] But though the nation may have been punished for the sins of slavery, it was still to be acknowledged as singularly favored of God. Here the increasingly ingrained nature of the ideology became a crucial factor in the rhetoric. Principally through reiteration, speakers reminded the American people of their divine election. Again such a rhetorical strategy seemed most likely to help an audience adjust to the painful or the disconcerting. The ways of the Lord might be mysterious, but the audience was reminded that He was, after all, furthering a divine scheme in their behalf. Grover Cleveland, for example, professed: "I know there is a Supreme Being who rules the affairs of men and whose goodness and mercy have always followed the American people."[69] In his First Inaugural Address, William McKinley opened with the statement that "our faith teaches us that there is no safer reliance than upon the God of our fathers, who had so singularly favored the American people in every national trial."[70] In the twentieth century there was hardly less conviction. Theodore Roosevelt asserted that our achievements were the result of the circumstance that we were blessed by the Giver of Good";[71] Warren Harding thought the founding fathers divinely inspired and could see "God's intent" in the formation of "this new-world Republic"; Franklin Roosevelt acknowledged simply that "the Almighty God has blessed our land in many ways."[72]

By extension, another aspect of God's bounty took on increased importance. The early Presidents particularly talked of our "experiment" as the focus of world attention and, more, of international "admiration and respect."[73] Increasingly, the success of this growing republican government was viewed as God's message to the world. Buchanan felt sure that the government would not perish until it had performed the role Providence had in mind for it: namely, to be "peacefully instrumental by its example in the extension of civil and religious liberty throughout the world."[74]

Gradually, an interesting shift took place in the rhetoric, allowing for a redefinition of the idea that America enjoyed God's special favor. As God's chosen people, Americans embraced the notion that their nation was the perfection of His handiwork. Quite likely influenced by the

process of secularization as well as growing American power and prestige, the Presidents spoke more explicitly of America as the example for all mankind to follow. At the same time, their statements became increasingly implicit with regard to God's specific role in the nation's destiny. President Grant was convinced that "the civilized world is tending toward republicanism . . . and that our own great Republic is destined to be the guiding star for all others."[75] Theodore Roosevelt was not one to minimize America's importance to "the welfare of mankind." He was sure that if America failed "the cause of free self-government throughout the world will rock to its foundation."[76] The Presidents of the twentieth century reaffirmed America's exemplary preeminence. Wilson saw our system as "a model for those who seek to set liberty upon foundations that will endure"; Harding prophesied that "when the Governments of the earth shall have established a freedom like our own" warfare would cease; he saw America as "an inspiring example of freedom and civilization to all mankind."[77] Coolidge believed that "what America is and what America has done . . . inspires the heart of all humanity."[78] And the ill-fated Herbert Hoover, standing on the brink of economic disaster, held America up as the most developed country in the world. In a prideful flight made bitterly ironic by history, Hoover declared:

> Ours is a land rich in resources; stimulating in its glorious beauty; filled with millions of happy homes; blessed with comfort and opportunity. In no nation are the institutions of progress more advanced. In no nation are the fruits of accomplishment more secure. In no nation is the government more worthy of respect. No country is more loved by its people. I have an abiding faith in their capacity, integrity and high purpose. I have no fears for the future of our country. It is bright with hope.[79]

Depression and war may have jolted the American psyche, but they did not destroy national confidence. And they decidedly did not convince Presidents to abandon the tenet that had become a rhetorical staple. As the final year of World War II began, Franklin Roosevelt asserted that God "has given our people stout hearts and strong arms with which to strike mighty blows for freedom and truth. He has given to our country a faith which has become the hope of all peoples in an anguished world."[80] At the war's end there was no question of America's leadership and involvement in the affairs of the world. The faith was no shared: "The faith we hold," Dwight Eisenhower said, "belongs not to us alone, but to the free of all the world." It was this faith, the faith of our American fathers, that made us the awe-inspiring nation we were, that made "our productivity the wonder of the world."[81] And, despite the years of protest and criticism, the national ego projected by the Presidents remained unshattered. Albeit somewhat defensively, Richard Nixon was able to exhort Americans to be "proud that our system has produced and provided more freedom and more abundance, more widely shared, than any other system in the history of the world."[82]

59

Americans finally came, in the post-war years, to see themselves as much more than merely a nation worthy of emulation, but as the very salvation of civilization. By 1973 President Nixon was to warn that "unless we in America work to preserve freedom, there will be no freedom."[83] This flattering self-concept, like the earlier notion that the American example would help to reform "corrupt" Britain, carried enormous ramifications. To be God's chosen people meant that Americans had to do His work in the world; they had to save Europe from itself after the world wars and uplift heathen Asia. Such a view of the world could not allow for differing perceptions of differing people, nor could it accept shortcomings in international affairs as anything but moral failures.

Despite God's mysterious ways, the Presidents seemed clearly to discern His hand in guiding the destiny of the new republic toward its end as a superpower. The rhetoric assumed, at times, a self-satisfied tone; speaking for all Americans, the Presidents were prone to remind themselves of, and congratulate themselves on, their own grandeur. There were, nevertheless, also moments of humility that seemed to be meant to save America from *hubris*. Washington, convinced as he was that God had acted directly in the affairs of the infant nation, did not see divine patronage as unqualified: ". . . the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained."[84] From time to time Presidents stressed the conditional nature of Heavenly blessing. Benjamin Harrison testified to God's bounty in placing "upon our heads a diadem and . . . at our feet power and wealth." Then came the warning: "But we must not forget that we can take these gifts upon the condition that justice and mercy shall hold the reins of power and that the upward avenues of hope shall be free to all people."[85] President Taylor acknowledged the "protecting care" of God and urged that the country be deserving of its continuance by behaving with "prudence and moderation," by assuaging bitterness, and by practicing "just and liberal principles."[86] Lincoln sadly affirmed divine chastisement in his Second Inaugural Address, and Cleveland and McKinley both advised humility.[87] But it was Lyndon Johnson who put the idea directly and, in the light of the national agony of the Vietnam War that followed, perhaps most poignantly: "But we have no promise from God that our greatness will endure. . . . If we fail now, we shall have forgotten in abundance what we learned in hardship: that democracy rests on faith, that freedom asks more than it gives, and that the judgment of God is harshest on those who are most favored."[88]

There can be little doubt that the Presidents believed that Americans were unique. Such an idea, planted in colonial New England soil and germinated by revolution, grew to be indestructable. The idea was modified, of course, over time and the special Heavenly protection seemed to be more ritualistically acknowledged in an increasingly secular state. Even so, the rhetorical strategy that relied on identification between the American and the divine mission, was only modified, not abandoned.

America's greatness became, itself, evidence for its special role in the world.

The conviction that this country was "chosen out and foster'd by the Almighty hand" became deeply implanted in the American psyche.[89] With the uniqueness of God's favor blended the uniqueness of the land itself, its vastness, its richness, its seemingly endless potential for development. Under an overruling Providence that "delights in the happiness of man," America was described by Jefferson as "a chosen country, with room enough for our descendants to the thousandth and thousandth generation."[90] Just as the early Revolutionaries had envisioned a great republican empire, the Presidents foresaw the steady growth of America, under a special providence, in territory, prestige, and power.

The second element in the ideological mix, the vision of America as a rising empire of liberty, provided the Presidential orators with a major theme for Inaugural rhetoric as the new United States extended inexorably their sway from sea to sea. The empire concept was, however, to be severely tested, and its role in the overall scheme of things hotly debated at the end of the nineteenth century: that debate will be examined in the next chapter. As the Inaugural Addresses recounted the growth of the nation, the development of the empire as envisioned by the Revolutionary forebears was not only pointed to with pride, but was used as evidence that the great dream was being fulfilled. When the Reverend Peter Thacher in 1776 questioned "whether the rising empire of America shall be an empire of slaves or of freemen,"[91] he could scarcely have imagined the rate and extent of the new nation's growth. Such growth provided concrete evidence both of God's bounty and America's greatness, thus binding together two strands of the ideology. Thomas Jefferson surveyed the scene at the beginning of the new century and saw "A rising nation spread over a wide and fruitful land . . . advancing rapidly to distances beyond the reach of mortal eye."[92] In the years that immediately followed, Jefferson was to promote that advance spectacularly with the purchase of the Louisiana Territory.

The march of the flag was catalogued in some detail and not without awe by succeeding Presidents. In his Second Inaugural Address James Monroe reviewed the "physical attainments" of the country from the time "twenty-five years ago," when "the river Mississippi was shut up and our Western brethern had no outlet for their commerce." By 1821 the river was in American hands, Louisiana on the west and Florida on the east ceded to the United States, new states had been admitted to the Union, and the population had been "augmented in an astounding degree and extended in every direction."[93] In Monroe's view, "no country was ever happier with respect to its domain."[94] No less impressed was Monroe's successor, John Quincy Adams, who pointed out that since the adoption of the United States Constitution a mere thirty-six years earlier, the nation's population of four million had multiplied to twelve. "A territory bounded

by the Mississippi," Adams exulted, "has been extended from sea to sea. New States have been admitted to the Union in numbers nearly equal to those of the first Confederation." Furthermore, while God may have given His blessing, it was clear that Americans were quite capable of exploiting advantages: "The forest has fallen by the axe of our woodsmen; the soil has been made to teem by the tillage of our farmers; our commerce has whitened every ocean. The domination of man over physical nature has been extended by the invention of our artists."[95] Twenty years later James Polk marveled that the number of states "increased from thirteen to twenty-eight" while the American population expanded almost sevenfold to twenty million.[96] President after President noted the territorial expansion and the increase of states in the Union. Franklin Pierce's allusion to the flag presaged the symbolic use of the stars and stripes to epitomize the nation's growth. "The stars upon your banner have become nearly threefold their original number," he observed, as American "possessions skirt the shores of the two great oceans."[97]

Prior to the Civil War such enumerations of the signs of expansion were common. But such pointing with pride was alloyed with a seemingly necessary defense of expansion. Thomas Jefferson's dramatic acquisition was generally approved and easily ratified by the Senate, although there were doubts about the constitutionality of the action. During the 1804 campaign the Federalists criticized the President, referring to him as the "Emperor of Louisiana," and poked fun at the "Mountain of Salt" said to be found in the Purchase territory.[98] But the principal apprehensions to which Jefferson and his successors addressed themselves were the fears that the extension of territory would weaken the Union and that republican government would prove incapable of maintaining its vigor when stretched to cover such a wide area. Such notions, of course, were contrary to the glorious vision of a great republican empire, and this aspect of the American ideology was used as support, and in turn was strengthened, in Inaugural rhetoric. "But who can limit the extent to which the federative principle may operate effectively?" Jefferson asked. Far from endangering the Union, "The larger our association the less it will be shaken by local passions." Perhaps of the most critical importance, however, was the question of who our neighbors would be. Jefferson thought that surely it was "better that the opposite bank of the Mississippi should be settled by our own brethren and children than by strangers of another family."[99]

Periodically during the first half of the nineteenth century, the argument that expansion would weaken America was reviewed and each time laid to rest. Martin Van Buren, for example, observed that although "our system was supposed to be adapted only to boundries comparatively narrow," the Republic had, on the contrary, risen in "power and influence . . . to a height obvious to all mankind."[100] By 1845 Polk "confidently believed that our system may be safely extended to the uttermost bounds of our ter-

ritorial limits, and that as it shall be extended the bonds of our Union, so far from being weakened, will become stronger."[101] President Pierce declared that "the apprehension of danger from extended territory" had "proven to be unfounded"; his Administration would "not be controlled by any timid forebodings of evil from expansion."[102] Probably because the United States had completed its continental acquisition by the time of his Inauguration, Grant was the last President to mention explicitly the fear "held by many as to danger of governments becoming weakened and destroyed by reason of their expansion of territory." When he defensively mentioned his abortive attempt to annex "Santo Domingo as a Territory of the Union," he revealed a vision of an ever-expanding American empire which bordered on the bizarre, or at least the presumptuous. He professed to believe "that our Great Maker is preparing the world, in His own good time, to become one nation, speaking one language, and when armies and navies will be no longer required"[103]—a *lingua* and *pax Americana* that no other President brought himself to envision in quite the same way even at the height of American pretensions to world leadership. That such a statement could be uttered by a President in his most important national address reveals how profoundly the ideology that emerged from the Revolutionary rhetoric had shaped the perceptions and attitudes of the American audience.

The spread of the American empire was an idea that both informed and transformed the Inaugural rhetoric. As the wisdom of the policy of territorial expansion became virtually unquestioned, Presidents reinforced the positive nature of the idea by associating it with other cherished values. "Liberty and law," John Quincy Adams declared, "have marched hand in hand."[104] Polk saw the pioneers "establishing the blessings of self-government," and laid down the maxim that "to enlarge its [the Union's] limits is to extend the dominions of peace over additional territories and increasing millions."[105] James Buchanan summarized the blessings of the republican empire: ". . . in all our acquisitions the people, under the protection of the American flag, have enjoyed civil and religious liberty, as well as equal and just laws and have been contented, prosperous, and happy."[106]

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries America's vast republican empire took on less republican coloration. In Puerto Rico, in the Philippines, American pro-consuls ruled native inhabitants. Himself a former Governor of the Philippines, William Howard Taft defined this anomaly as more apparent than real. "Our Government in each dependency," he maintained, "is upholding the traditions of civil liberty and increasing popular control which might be expected under American auspices. The work which we are doing there redounds to our credit as a nation."[107] Taft did not see any way in which America had deviated from McKinley's dictum of a dozen years before: "We want no wars of conquest; we must avoid the temptation of territorial ag-

gression."[108] But the underlying clash of values and the inherent contradiction of certain aspects of the ideology were profound. Reconciliation of these differences through the intense national debate over imperialism permitted the continuing influence of the Revolutionary legacy upon American foreign policy into the twentieth century.

After a peaceful interlude of over a decade, World War I forced the citizens of the United States to return their attention to international affairs, and the American ideology was again called into play to shape perceptions and interpret the welter of confusing new demands. Woodrow Wilson's efforts to make America play the role of the honest broker failed, however, and the nation turned back upon itself with relief. As empire and imperialism became unfashionable and then flatly pejorative terms, the Presidents altered their discussions of the American empire. Although they recognized that the American empire was already established in its natural boundaries, the orators did not abandon this aspect of the ideology. Instead, they changed it rhetorically into more ethereal terms. The revised rhetoric of empire seemed designed to make it more acceptable to an isolationist America; the style became that of visionaries and not activists. Calvin Coolidge, assuring the world that "America seeks no earthly empire built on blood and force," claimed that the legions which she sent forth were armed "not with the sword, but with the cross. . . . She cherishes no purpose save to merit the favor of Almighty God."[109] Perhaps the Calvinistic President was thinking of the Sunday School children whose mites were saved to send to the missionaries rescuing souls in Africa and Asia. As cloying and self-serving as the passage sounds, the notion was, nevertheless, consistent in basic intent with the Revolutionary repudiation of the idea that America should subjugate another people. The times now demanded a rhetorical emphasis on this aspect of the empire idea, rather than on the growth of American influence. The Inaugural Addresses thus conserved that basic proposition and put it to use in support of a stable and aloof America. Thomas Paine's "empire of freedom" had been put squarely in opposition to Britain's "empire of despotism,"[110] and this fundamental idea still surfaced in American rhetoric even if the precise formations were sometimes exotic.

As the century progressed the Presidents tried to make clear the idealistic and non-imperialistic nature of America as they spoke of a spiritual interpretation of the idea of empire. "Those who have a true understanding of America," Herbert Hoover insisted, "know that we have no desire for territorial expansion, for economic or other domination of other peoples." According to Hoover "the American people are engrossed in the building for themselves of a new economic system, a new social system, a new political system—all of which are characterized by aspirations of freedom of opportunity and thereby are the negation of imperialism."[111] The post World War II period accentuated American protestations of non-imperialism. Meant certainly as a contrast to our

Cold War opponents was the declaration by President Truman that "we have sought no territory, and have imposed our will on none. We have asked for no privileges we would not extend to others." To the Communist charges of Yankee imperialism Truman answered, "the old imperialism—exploitation for foreign profit—has no place in our plans."[112] And Dwight D. Eisenhower wished to "assure our friends once again that . . . we Americans know and we observe the difference between world leadership and imperialism."[113] Poised on the edge of the Vietnam abyss, Lyndon Johnson once more averred, "We aspire to nothing that belongs to others. We seek no dominion over our fellow man, but man's dominion over tyranny and misery."[114]

In light of the efforts of recent Presidents—certainly from Kennedy to Nixon—to manipulate and control the governments of other nations, Johnson's proclamation invites the charge of insincerity, even hypocrisy. But to dismiss these appeals as sham is to miss the significance of the continuing rhetoric of the American Revolution. Johnson and his audience believed that America could, by its example, promote the expansion of liberal democracies in the world. Moreover, Americans seemed to share Johnson's assumption that the rest of the world should want to follow our model. When developing nations inexplicably proved recalcitrant, Americans and their Presidents were baffled and offended. The ideal of the American example and the American obligation to protect liberty were so powerful in shaping American perceptions, that when their example was ignored—when the American empire of liberty was rebuffed—Americans seemed to assume that their foreign brothers were maliciously misinformed and misled by national heads of dubious worth. Should America allow its historic duty to be frustrated by a few bad leaders in other lands? To fail to act in such instances, it appears, was viewed as a sort of treason to the American past.

The great republican empire envisioned by the patriots had attained the zenith expected of it. It had grown from sea to sea and had managed to preserve essentially the form of government designed for it. The grand and mighty nation may have been rent by civil war, but it survived. As it became an increasing, if initially reluctant, force in world affairs, the purity of the empire might have been called into question, but its basic libertarian foundation was affirmed by the Presidents. The Inaugural rhetoric took advantage of the flexibility of the ideology, using it both to justify current trends and to conserve the integrity of the American image through its interpretation of events. The empire, after all, was never meant to be an exclusively physical one. The spiritual home of liberty, the American empire was also conceived as one of enduring spiritual values and thus contained a dimension that exceeded territoriality alone. How the imperial mystique should function—the way in which the physical-spiritual balance might be tipped—was to become a matter of intense debate. Certainly by the end of the nineteenth century, empire and expansion seemed perceptually wed-

ded. Then, with the eclipse of the imperial idea (as it came to be accepted), American leaders reiterated the country's unwillingness to acquire the territory of others. The extent to which America was, indeed, guilty of economic imperialism or the kind of social-political imperialism which made her hope that all governments would be fashioned in the American image, is a matter of serious historical interest. But whatever the explanation of American actions, the reality of events was shaped in part by the rhetoric that interpreted them. Throughout their history Americans have seen their growth as a fulfillment of "the final glory of an Independent Empire in America," and assured themselves that their motives, far from those of self-aggrandizement, were purely humanitarian.[115] Thus, the ideology acted to rationalize expansionism and mitigate international involvement. The rhetoric of the rising nation both used and strengthened the American ideology. From the beginning those who envisioned an American empire believed it to be unique, not only because it was favored of God and was destined for greatness, but above all because it was an empire dedicated to liberty rather than tyranny.

America as the home and hope of liberty, a third powerful idea to grow from the Revolutionary rhetoric, was likewise taken up in the Inaugural Addresses. When George Washington took the oath of office no one, whether he wished the young country good or ill, would have contested the idea that the form of the new government was singular. The phrase so often selected to describe the evolving American government was most apt: what was happening in the New World was, indeed, a profound "experiment." The Revolutionary orators had, in anthropomorphic metaphor, seen "liberty" take her abode in the virgin land. Following the long struggle, an independent government was finally established. Fourteen years after he had taken command of the troops on the plains of Boston, Washington assumed the Chief Magistracy of the new nation. On this occasion the first President voiced the conviction that was to become firmly established by succeeding generations: that "the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty" was "*deeply . . . finally*, staked on the experiment intrusted to the American people."[116] America was set apart from "the ancient world." The "agonizing spasms of infuriated man, seeking through blood and slaughter his long-lost liberty" might be so great as to affect "even this distant and peaceful shore." But, Thomas Jefferson reminded Americans, who had lived through the rancorous election of 1800, that liberty was but a "dreary" thing without "harmony and affection."[117] Americans seemed to have a particular responsibility to preserve liberty. James Monroe argued that foreign nations might wish to destroy us and, if the home of liberty was demolished, liberty itself would be lost.[118] William Henry Harrison talked of the death of liberty in ancient Rome and characterized her in much the same way as did the Revolutionary orators: "The spirit of liberty had fled . . . and so under the operation of the same causes and influences (viz., factionalism) it will fly from our Capitol and

our forums." And for Liberty to perish in America would be a "calamity . . . not only to our country, but to the world."[119]

"Liberty", which had found its true home in America, functioned as a kind of evidentiary touchstone in Presidential rhetoric. The ideology thus operated to support ideas, values, or arguments that the speakers hoped to identify with the heritage devolving from Revolutionary rhetoric. This linking tactic associated the highly prized concept of liberty with the aims of the Presidential orator. Such a relationship could alter the audience's perception of the proposed policy. Liberty, for example, was linked to union by Andrew Jackson who argued that "without union our independence and liberty would never have been achieved; without union they can never maintained." He was certain that "a dissolution of the Union" would lead to a "loss of liberty."[120] Preservation of the Constitution was essential, reasoned Polk, since "the blessings of liberty" were "secured and guaranteed" by this document.[121] William Henry Harrison saw it as a safeguard against the decline of our institutions because "the spirit of liberty" became a conservative force, both buttressing and being supported by the idea of "law."[122] "Liberty—liberty within the law—and civilization are inseparable," Warren Harding maintained. President Harding was further certain that civilization and liberty found their "highest expression and surest guaranty" in the American form of government.[123] Herbert Hoover, faced with massive disobedience of the Volstad Act, saw "rigid and expeditious justice" as "the basis of all ordered liberty."[124] And Franklin Roosevelt, looking anxiously at the catastrophic war in Europe, returned to George Washington's words to strengthen implicitly his anti-Nazi course. "If we lose that sacred fire—if we let it be smothered by doubt and fear—then we shall reject the destiny which Washington strove so valiantly and so triumphantly to establish."[125] The idea that liberty was an inseparable part of the American ideal became fundamental to American political discourse. This idea was so ingrained in the American mind that it could be appealed to as almost the final arbiter.

Just as the Revolutionaries thought of America as an asylum for those seeking liberty as well as the home of the spirit of liberty, so too, did the Presidents. The rising tide of immigration was justified through the ideology. In the nineteenth century the immigrants came "unmindful of names or distinctions," in Tom Paine's words.[126] War, famine, oppression brought the Europeans: "multitudes from the Old World . . . flocking to our shores to participate in its blessings," Polk proudly exclaimed.[127] Franklin Pierce lauded the founding fathers "whose minds had been illuminated by the dawning lights of the Revolution," and maintained that "the oppressed throughout the world from that day to the present have turned their eyes higherward, not to find those lights extinguished or to fear lest they should wane, but to be constantly cheered by their steady and increasing radiance."[128] And James Buchanan called for the preservation of public lands in part to secure a place "for those exiles from foreign

shores who may seek in this country to improve their condition and to enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty."[129]

Toward the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the idea of America as an asylum for all was severely constricted. Particularly under the pressure of increased Oriental immigration, the shining hope for all the world diminished considerably. Those who were too different were to be excluded. Under these circumstances rhetoric demonstrated its usefulness in adapting the ideology to meet the pressures of the moment while, at the same time, calling upon the long accepted ideas to justify a present course of action. In 1886 Grover Cleveland put it thus: "The laws should be rigidly enforced which prohibit the immigration of a servile class to compete with the American labor, with no intention of acquiring citizenship, and bringing with them and retaining habits and customs repugnant to our civilization."[130] In order to protect America as the asylum for the concept of liberty, so the argument ran, America could no longer be the asylum for all the oppressed races of the world. Benjamin Harrison was no less concerned about the "character and good disposition" of immigrants than was his predecessor. While "we should not cease to be hospitable to immigration," Harrison argued, "we should cease to be careless as to the character of it." Surely those persons who would be "a burden upon our public revenues or a threat to social order . . . should be identified and excluded."[131] William Howard Taft was quite specific about excluding "Asiatic immigrants who cannot be amalgamated with our population."[132]

In spite of the exceptions and the modifications that had to be accomodated, still the ideal remained, and the idea persisted that the haven for liberty both drew from and gave strength to immigrants. Franklin Roosevelt asserted that the "faith of America. . . was born in the multitudes of those who came from many lands"; and Lyndon Johnson, himself instrumental in liberalizing restrictive immigration laws, described the "exile and the stranger" in the heroic terms of the ideology: "they came . . . to find a place where a man could be his own man. They made a covenant with this land. Conceived in justice, written in liberty, bound in union, it was meant one day to inspire the hope of all mankind; and it binds us still. If we keep its terms, we shall flourish."[133]

In the twentieth century the idea of the home of liberty was profoundly modified as the concept of America, the example of liberty to all the world, shifted significantly to become the notion of America the champion of liberty. It is not surprising that a nation that saw itself as especially favored and especially to be emulated, whose prestige and power thrust it perforce into world affairs, could conceive of itself as the world's best hope and the natural defender of Right. And as the pressures mounted, it would become easier to distinguish Right from Wrong: "Freedom is pitted against slavery; lightness against the dark," Dwight Eisenhower said.[134]

The trend toward international responsibilities for the home of liberty

can be discerned in Woodrow Wilson's Second Inaugural Address. He maintained that the principles upon which Americans were bred were not parochial, not the principles of Americans alone; rather, "they were the principles of a liberated mankind."[135] When repudiation of internationalism followed the end of World War I, however, the argument disappeared from Inaugural rhetoric—only to emerge in greater intensity after 1945. Harry Truman pledged: "we will strengthen freedom-loving nations against the dangers of aggression." He declared that "events have brought our American democracy to new influence and new responsibilities. They will test our courage, our devotion to duty, and our concept of liberty."[136] Indeed, events and American reaction to events did test the concept. Dwight Eisenhower reiterated the time-honored belief that "the American experiment has, for generations, fired the passion and the courage of millions elsewhere seeking freedom, equality and opportunity." But then he added significantly, "these hopes that we helped to inspire, we can help to fulfill."[137] Four years later John Kennedy made the now familiar dramatic commitment: "Let every nation know whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty."[138] The United States became responsible not just for liberty in America and not just for the preservation of an asylum—the future of liberty itself rested with America. And America was not to be "peacefully instrumental by its example," as President Buchanan would have had it, but actually to bear the burden.[139]

For Lyndon Johnson new responsibilities had developed for an America that, in the past, helped "to show the way for the liberation of man." Now, "change has brought new meaning to that old mission. We can never again stand alone, prideful in isolation." And "if American lives must end and American treasure be spilled, in countries we barely know, that is the price that change has demanded for conviction and of our enduring government."[140] The price proved one too painful, and the anguish of a divisive war caused Americans to reconsider their role as guardians of the world's liberty. Even so, Richard Nixon in 1973 would have found only minor exception taken to his observation that "America's role is indispensable in preserving the world's peace," although he was constrained to add, "so is each nation's role indispensable in preserving its own peace." America could not retire from world leadership, nor is there any indication in the Nixon rhetoric that there were any intentions of doing so. Although a muted note of caution had appeared in Nixon's Second Inaugural Address, a basic idea remained intact. America was still seen as a bright "beacon of hope for all the world."[141] During the 1976 Presidential primary elections, former California Governor Ronald Reagan launched a formidable campaign against President Gerald Ford by claiming that Ford was acquiescing in an American retreat from world domination. In his first address as President of the United States, Jimmy Carter reminded

Americans: "Because we are free we can never be indifferent to the fate of freedom elsewhere. Our moral sense dictates a clearcut preference for those societies which share with us an abiding respect for individual human rights."[142]

Thus the idea of America as an asylum for liberty, fostered by the fathers of the Revolution, was perpetuated and finally came to be extended to serve as support for American involvement abroad. For good or ill, the ideology allowed America's leaders to call upon the sanction of the past to reinforce the nation's image of itself as the home and defender of liberty and to support its ever-widening international commitments.

The Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States, forty-eight of them, have not, on the whole, produced a wealth of great oratory. Most of what was said has been forgotten with but a few of the phrases of Jefferson, Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and Kennedy lingering in our language. But the Addresses, delivered amidst the traditional ceremony and pomp, marked a regular reaffirmation of values. To the extent that they demonstrate the pervasive qualities of an important body of ideas growing out of the Revolution, they can be said to represent the embodiment of an American ideology. Americans have always exhibited a strong sense of practicality and flexibility; witness, for example, their ability to adapt the Constitution of 1787 to contemporary needs, so that it remains the ultimate legal recourse in the 1970s. Certainly the ideology proved not to be a strict and binding one. Principal spokesmen for established institutions, as the Presidents certainly were, found in it justification and inspiration for a variety of actions and attitudes. The ideology of the Revolution was not always, or even principally, revolutionary as it was sustained and developed throughout our history. But it did serve as a consistent, agreed-upon point of departure for Inaugural rhetoric—an underpinning of assumptions and evidence for arguments. Stressing, as they were bound to, continuity and stability, the Inaugural Addresses generally put the ideology to conservative use.

The Presidents, caught up as they were in the struggles of their own times, may well have distorted reality; our perspective of the sweep of history justifies our suspicions of hypocrisy and cant. The fact remains, however, that the ideology provided a way of organizing perceptions through rhetoric. And in order to understand fully the reality of the American panorama, one must understand the rhetorical transformation of ideas into guideposts. The belief in a chosen nation growing ever to fulfill its destiny as the preserver and defender of liberty, then, has played its part in molding our vision and shaping our action. Through the ideology we could see ourselves as progressing in an orderly fashion toward the ultimate Light, building upon what Thomas Jefferson called "the wisdom of the sages and the blood of our heroes."[143]

70

CHAPTER II

NOTES

[1]William Maclay, *The Journal of William Maclay: United States Senator from Pennsylvania, 1789-1791* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1965), pp. 6-8.

[2]Apparently the President drafted a seventy-three page speech, but shelved it finally in favor of the twenty-minute address he did give. See James Thomas Flexner, *George Washington and the New Nation, 1783-1793* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969), p. 183.

[3]Maclay, p. 9.

[4]*The Writings of George Washington*, ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1891), XI, 383n.

[5]George Washington, "Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1793," *Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States from George Washington 1789 to Richard Milhous Nixon 1973* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1974), p. 5. Hereafter this volume is cited as *Addresses*.

[6]Letter to Abigail Adams, March 17, 1797, in *John Adams: A Biography in His Own Words*, ed. James Bishop Peabody (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 359.

[7]Jefferson, March 4, 1801, *Addresses*, p. 14.

[8]Monroe, March 4, 1817, *Addresses*, p. 29.

[9]Kennedy, January 20, 1961, *Addresses*, p. 267.

[10]Monroe, March 5, 1821, *Addresses*, p. 37.

[11]J. Q. Adams, March 4, 1825, *Addresses*, p. 48.

[12]Van Buren, March 4, 1837, *Addresses*, p. 62.

[13]J. Q. Adams, March 4, 1825, *Addresses*, p. 49.

[14]W. H. Harrison, March 4, 1841, *Addresses*, pp. 71-87.

[15]Benjamin Perley Poore, *Perley's Reminiscences of Sixty Years in the National Metropolis* (Philadelphia: Hubbard Brothers, 1886), I, 250; and Peter Harvey, *Reminiscences and Anecdotes of Daniel Webster* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1877), pp. 161-163.

[16]Martin Van Buren, "Reply to the Letter from North Carolina Citizens, March 6, 1836," *History of American Presidential Elections*, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., (New York: Chelsea House, 1971), I, 604.

[17]Van Buren, March 4, 1837, *Addresses*, p. 63.

[18]Pierce, March 4, 1853, *Addresses*, p. 109.

[19]*Ibid.*, p. 105.

[20]*Ibid.*, p. 108.

[21]W. H. Harrison, March 4, 1841, *Addresses*, p. 83.

[22]Polk, March 4, 1845, *Addresses*, p. 93.

[23]Taylor, March 5, 1849, *Addresses*, p. 101.

[24]Pierce, March 4, 1853, *Addresses*, p. 108.

[25]Buchanan, March 4, 1857, *Addresses*, p. 113.

[26]Lincoln, March 4, 1861, *Addresses*, p. 125.

[27]Frederick Douglass, "The Fourth of July [Rochester, N.Y., July 5, 1852]," reprinted in Arthur L. Smith, *Rhetoric of Black Revolution* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1969), pp. 130, 136.

[28]Frederick Douglass, "The Right to Criticize American Institutions [an address to the American Anti-Slavery Society, 1847]," reprinted in Ernest G. Bormann, *Forerunners of Black Power: The Rhetoric of Abolition* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp. 157-158.

[29]Jefferson Davis, "Inaugural Address [Feb. 22, 1862, Richmond, Virginia]," reprinted in *Documents of American History*, ed. Henry Steele Commager, 7th ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), I, 408-409.

[30]Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), p. 51.

[31]Jackson, March 4, 1833, *Addresses*, p. 59.

[32]Polk, March 4, 1845, *Addresses*, p. 92.

[33]Lincoln, March 4, 1865, *Addresses*, p. 128; also see Robert N. Bellah's discussion of Lincoln's ceremonial speeches in "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus*, 96 (Winter 1967), 1-21.

[34]Garfield, March 4, 1881, *Addresses*, p. 142.

[35]Cleveland, March 4, 1885, *Addresses*, p. 150.

[36]B. Harrison, March 4, 1889, *Addresses*, p. 154.

[37]McKinley, March 4, 1901, *Addresses*, p. 180.

[38]T. Roosevelt, March 4, 1905, *Addresses*, p. 185.

[39]Coolidge, March 4, 1925, *Addresses*, p. 216.

[40]Eisenhower, January 20, 1953, *Addresses*, p. 259.

[41]B. Harrison, March 4, 1889, *Addresses*, p. 155.

[42]F. D. Roosevelt, March 4, 1933, *Addresses*, pp. 235-237.

[43]"Republican Platform of 1936," *History of American Presidential Elections*, III, 2856-2857.

[44]F. D. Roosevelt, January 20, 1937, *Addresses*, pp. 240-241.

[45]Harding, March 4, 1921, *Addresses*, p. 208.

[46]Kennedy, January 20, 1961, *Addresses*, p. 267.

[47]Monroe, March 4, 1817, *Addresses*, p. 35.

[48]Harding, March 4, 1921, *Addresses*, p. 212.

[49]F. D. Roosevelt, January 20, 1941, *Addresses*, p. 244.

[50]Truman, January 20, 1949, *Addresses*, p. 252.

[51]Washington, April 30, 1789, *Addresses*, p. 2.

[52]*Ibid.*

[53]J. Adams, March 4, 1797, *Addresses*, p. 7.

[54]Jefferson, March 4, 1805, *Addresses*, p. 21.

72

[55]Madison, March 4, 1809, *Addresses*, p. 25; and Monroe, March 4, 1817, *Addresses*, p.136.

[56]J. Q. Adams, March 4, 1825, *Addresses*, p. 53.

[57]Jackson, March 4, 1833, *Addresses*, p. 60.

[58]Van Buren, March 4, 1837, *Addresses*, p. 62.

[59]W. H. Harrison, March 4, 1841, *Addresses*, p. 87.

[60]Polk, March 4, 1845, *Addresses*, p. 90.

[61]Taylor, March 5, 1849, *Addresses*, p. 101.

[62]Pierce, March 4, 1853, *Addresses*, p. 109.

[63]Buchanan, March 4, 1857, *Addresses*, p. 111.

[64]Monroe, March 5, 1821, *Addresses*, p. 45.

[65]W. H. Harrison, March 4, 1841, *Addresses*, p. 87.

[66]Buchanan, March 4, 1857, *Addresses*, p. 113.

[67]Lincoln, March 4, 1861, *Addresses*, p. 126.

[68]Lincoln, March 4, 1865, *Addresses*, p. 128. Also see Ernest G. Bormann, "Fetching Good Out Of Evil: A Rhetorical Use of Calamity," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 63 (April 1977), esp. pp. 134-139.

[69]Cleveland, March 4, 1893, *Addresses*, p. 167.

[70]McKinley, March 4, 1897, *Addresses*, p. 169.

[71]T. Roosevelt, March 4, 1905, *Addresses*, p. 183.

[72]Harding, March 4, 1921, *Addresses*, p. 208; and F. D. Roosevelt, January 20, 1945, *Addresses*, p. 249. Also see Roderick P. Hart, *The Political Pulpit* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1977), pp. 69-75.

[73]See, e.g., Monroe, March 5, 1821, *Addresses*, p. 45.

[74]Buchanan, March 4, 1857, *Addresses*, p. 114.

[75]Grant, March 4, 1873, *Addresses*, p. 132.

[76]T. Roosevelt, March 4, 1905, *Addresses*, p. 184.

[77]Wilson, March 4, 1913, *Addresses*, p. 200; and Harding, March 4, 1921, *Addresses*, pp. 210, 208.

[78]Coolidge, March 4, 1925, *Addresses*, p. 215.

[79]Hoover, March 4, 1929, *Addresses*, p. 233.

[80]F. D. Roosevelt, January 20, 1945, *Addresses*, p. 249.

[81]Eisenhower, January 20, 1953, *Addresses*, p. 259.

[82]Nixon, Januray 20, 1973, *Addresses*, p. 283.

[83]*Ibid.*, p. 280.

[84]Washington, April 30, 1789, *Addresses*, p. 3.

[85]B. Harrison, March 4, 1889, *Addresses*, p. 161.

[86]Taylor, March 5, 1849, *Addresses*, p. 101.

[87]Lincoln, March 4, 1865, *Addresses*, p. 28; Cleveland, March 4, 1893, *Addresses*, p. 167; and McKinley, March 4, 1897, *Addresses*, p. 169.

[88]Johnson, January 20, 1965, *Addresses*, p. 273.

[89]Thomas Dawes, *An Oration Delivered March 5th, 1781 at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody*

Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770 (Boston: Thomas and John Fleet, 1781), p. 23.

[90]Jefferson, March 4, 1801, *Addresses*, p. 15.

[91]Peter Thacher, *An Oration Delivered at Watertown, March 5, 1776; to Commemorate the Bloody Massacre at Boston Perpetrated March 5, 1770* (Watertown, Mass.: Benjamin Edes, 1776), p. 14.

[92]Jefferson, March 4, 1801, *Addresses*, p. 13.

[93]Monroe, March 5, 1821, *Addresses*, p. 45.

[94]Monroe, March 4, 1817, *Addresses*, p. 31.

[95]J. Q. Adams, March 4, 1825, *Addresses*, p. 48.

[96]Polk, March 4, 1845, *Addresses*, p. 92.

[97]Pierce, March 4, 1853, *Addresses*, p. 105.

[98]*History of American Presidential Elections*, I, 178-179; and the *Massachusetts Federalist*, February 4, 1804.

[99]Jefferson, March 4, 1805, *Addresses*, p. 18.

[100]Van Buren, March 4, 1837, *Addresses*, p. 65.

[101]Polk, March 4, 1845, *Addresses*, p. 97.

[102]Pierce, March 4, 1853, *Addresses*, p. 105.

[103]Grant, March 4, 1873, *Addresses*, p. 133.

[104]J. Q. Adams, March 4, 1825, *Addresses*, p. 48.

[105]Polk, March 4, 1845, *Addresses*, pp. 97, 96.

[106]Buchanan, March 4, 1857, *Addresses*, p. 116.

[107]Taft, March 4, 1909, *Addresses*, p. 194.

[108]McKinley, March 4, 1897, *Addresses*, p. 175.

[109]Coolidge, March 4, 1925, *Addresses*, p. 223.

[110]Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* [3rd ed.] . . . *and a Dialogue Between the Ghost of General Montgomery Just Arrived From the Elysian Fields; and an American Delegate, in a Wood Near Philadelphia: On the Grand Subject of American Independency* (Philadelphia: R. Bell, 1776), pp. 15-16. This reference is to the *Dialogue* which has independent pagination.

[111]Hoover, March 4, 1929, *Addresses*, p. 230.

[112]Truman, January 20, 1949, *Addresses*, pp. 253, 255.

[113]Eisenhower, January 20, 1953, *Addresses*, p. 260.

[114]Johnson, January 20, 1965, *Addresses*, p. 272.

[115][Hugh Brackenridge], *The Death of General Montgomery at the Siege of Quebec: A Tragedy* (Philadelphia: Robert Bell, 1777), p. 2.

[116]Washington, April 30, 1789, *Addresses*, p. 3.

[117]Jefferson, March 4, 1801, *Addresses*, p. 14.

[118]Monroe, March 4, 1817, *Addresses*, p. 32.

[119]W. H. Harrison, March 4, 1841, *Addresses*, p. 86.

[120]Jackson, March 4, 1833, *Addresses*, p. 59.

[121]Polk, March 4, 1845, *Addresses*, p. 95.

[122]W. H. Harrison, March 4, 1841, *Addresses*, p. 84.

[123]Harding, March 4, 1921, *Addresses*, p. 207.

[124]Hoover, March 4, 1929, *Addresses*, p. 227.

[125]F. D. Roosevelt, January 20, 1941, *Addresses*, p. 246.

[126][Thomas Paine], "The Liberty Tree," *Pennsylvania Ledger*, Aug. 12, 1775, p. 4.

[127]Polk, March 4, 1845, *Addresses*, p. 92.

[128]Pierce, March 4, 1853, *Addresses*, p. 104.

[129]Buchanan, March 4, 1857, *Addresses*, p. 115.

[130]Cleveland, March 4, 1885, *Addresses*, p. 152.

[131]B. Harrison, March 4, 1889, *Addresses*, p. 157.

[132]Taft, March 4, 1909, *Addresses*, p. 192.

[133]F. D. Roosevelt, January 20, 1941, *Addresses*, p. 246; and Johnson, January 20, 1965, *Addresses*, p. 271.

[134]Eisenhower, January 20, 1953, *Addresses*, p. 259.

[135]Wilson, March 5, 1917, *Addresses*, p. 205.

[136]Truman, January 20, 1949, *Addresses*, pp. 254, 256.

[137]Eisenhower, January 21, 1957, *Addresses*, p. 265.

[138]Kennedy, January 20, 1961, *Addresses*, p. 268.

[139]Buchanan, March 4, 1857, *Addresses*, p. 113.

[140]Johnson, January 20, 1965, *Addresses*, p. 272.

[141]Nixon, January 20, 1973, *Addresses*, pp. 281, 283.

[142]"In Changing Times, Eternal Principles [Inaugural Address]," *New York Times*, Jan. 21, 1977, p. B1.

[143]Jefferson, March 4, 1801, *Addresses*, p. 16.

CHAPTER III

LIBERTY OR EMPIRE?

Emerging from the rhetoric of Revolutionary conflict, the American ideology was reinforced and brought to bear as a conservative force in interpreting the continuing flow of events through ceremonial discourses such as the Inaugural Addresses. The question can be raised, how was ideology used to inform the rhetoric of particular controversies? That is to say, what impact did the continuing rhetoric of the Revolution have on specific American actions. Two instances suggest themselves as fundamental examples of the rhetoric in process as it deals with the presentation of the ideology of the American audience: the imperialism debate that raged in America at the turn of the twentieth century, and the civil rights struggle that convulsed the nation in the decades following mid-century.

The imperialism question represented a serious ideological crisis. It began in the heat of a political campaign as a young aspirant to the United States Senate, Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana, addressed a crowd of cheering supporters at Tomlinson Hall in Indianapolis on September 16, 1898. "It is a glorious history our God has bestowed upon His chosen people," proclaimed Beveridge. The thirty-five year old political orator opened the 1898 campaign with an uncompromising endorsement of imperialism. American history, Beveridge asserted, was "a history heroic with faith in our mission and our future; a history of statesmen who flung the boundaries of the Republic out into unexplored lands and savage wilderness . . . even to the gates of sunset." The Hoosier orator recalled each extension of the United States from Florida to Oregon. Again and again he brought forth a roar of approval with the phrase: "And the march of the flag goes on!"[1] With a single partisan speech intended to serve the interests of the Indiana Republican Party in general and one young politician in particular, Beveridge initiated a public debate which would engage the country for over two years and involve the major political spokesmen of the nation. The imperialism debate concerned the essence of the American ideology that had evolved from the American Revolution, forcing the heirs

of that Revolution to decide whether the United States should be the foremost empire in the world or the example of liberty to the world.

Through the nineteenth century Americans had come to a comfortable understanding of their national ideology. As the analysis of Inaugural rhetoric shows, they believed themselves to be God's chosen people who, through His blessing, would establish a continental empire. This empire, protected by the two great oceans, would be the home of liberty—a pure refuge uncorrupted by European vices. For one hundred years after the Declaration of Independence, Fourth of July orators also would repeat the ritual incantation of the generations: *the Pilgrim fathers* who arrived on American shores searching for liberty and bearing the special protection of God; *the founding fathers* who instituted a perfect government which would "forever stand alone, a beacon on the summit of a mountain, to which all the inhabitants of the earth may turn their eyes for a genial and saving light";[2] and *the present generation* whose awesome task was to carry on the work of the Pilgrim and founding fathers—to fulfill the sacred trust as God's chosen people by building an American empire of liberty.[3] While the responsibility weighed heavily, nineteenth-century Americans had little doubt about their goal. Faithful to George Washington's warning not to "entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition,"[4] Americans saw little conflict between the idea of a continental empire and the idea of America as the home of liberty. To be sure, Patrick Henry had warned in 1788 that the proposed federal constitution sacrificed liberty for "a great and mighty empire."[5] But his fears, it was thought, had proven to be unfounded, and America was described, in Henry Clay's words, as "the rallying point of human freedom against the despotism of the old world."[6] As the light of liberty, John Quincy Adams reminded his Fourth of July audience, America ought not go abroad "in search of monsters to destroy."[7] This sort of agreement upon American ideals and objectives has lead Ernest R. May, a leading historian of American foreign policy, to suggest that throughout American history the great debates on foreign policy have reflected a "fundamental agreement" about national objectives. In these debates, May remarks, the "means to ends are at issue, not the ends themselves."[8] The imperialism debate of 1898 to 1900 was a striking exception, for Americans had to decide whether the idea of *empire* or the idea of *liberty* would have priority as America assumed its new role as a world power. The rhetorical problem, then, if the ideology was to continue to function conservatively, was to maintain the integrity of the two strands of the ideology while, at the same time, developing a hierarchy of values that would enable action to be taken that did not basically controvert the ideology.

The fruits of the Spanish-American War thrust the United States into world affairs once and for all. The idea of a pure American example, the notion of a continent separate from the world at large, survived in the rhetoric of American foreign policy, but it simply could not serve as a real

guide for America as a world power. Having entered the war to "free" Cuba from Spanish rule, the United States found itself by December 10, 1898, possessing Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine Islands. The Hawaiian Islands, whose annexation had been forestalled for five years, were also swept into American territory during the fervor of imperialism. Albert Beveridge remarked to a friend that "now all at once the fierce light of war" had revealed America's imperial destiny to its citizens.[9] But the nature of "American destiny" proved less certain to other Americans and anti-imperialists vigorously objected to a system of overseas colonies. The imperialism debate featured the leading orators and national leaders of the day, with William Jennings Bryan being the most prominent anti-imperialist and Beveridge the most ardent advocate of empire. Bryan and Beveridge each had a chorus of supporting spokesmen. The anti-imperialist camp included Grover Cleveland, Adlai Stevenson, Andrew Carnegie, and David Starr Jordan, the President of Stanford University. A host of more moderate speakers and writers joined Beveridge, including President McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Connecticut's Senator Thomas C. Platt, and Brooks Adams, the great grandson of John Adams.

Although "imperialism" was an elusive term even in 1898, the issue which separated the two political camps was not whether America should exert itself politically and economically as a world power, but rather whether America should exercise "the actual political domination" over other peoples.[10] Historians have variously accounted for the rise and fall of American imperialism, citing economic and psychological factors, European intellectual influences, propaganda efforts by religious groups, and America's tradition of anti-imperialism.[11] The purpose of this discussion is not to dispute earlier interpretations, but to reveal how the rhetorical legacy of the American Revolution actually shaped the imperialism controversy and defined its fundamental issues. Moreover, this investigation suggests that the imperialism debate served to adapt the rhetoric of the American Revolution to America's new role as a world power, and ultimately forced a type of rhetorical reconciliation which has served as the public rationale of American foreign policy in the twentieth century.

At root the imperialism debate was a struggle between two God terms of American culture: *liberty* and *empire*. Kenneth Burke has remarked that a God term "designates the ultimate motivation, or substance of a Constitutional frame." Such terms "posit a world" in the sense that the world is seen in light of the God term and everything is explained or ordered within its framework.[12] Richard Weaver has noted that a culture usually "manages to achieve some system of relationship among the attractive and among the repulsive terms, so that we can work out an order of weight and precedence in the prevailing rhetoric once we have discerned the 'rhetorical absolutes'—the terms to which the very highest respect is paid."[13] During the nineteenth century the "rhetorical absolute" or God term in America was liberty. The American empire was to be an empire of liberty. The duty

of the chosen people was to stand as the example of liberty, to keep the faith with the Pilgrim and founding fathers. In Weaver's terms, liberty was the "expression about which all other expressions . . . [were] ranked as subordinate"; it was, in Burke's words, "a *good* and *absolute* . . . endowed with the function of *God* as the grounding of values."[14] Hence, when Daniel Webster rose in the United States Senate on February 16, 1833, to reply to John Calhoun's doctrine of nullification, he did not appeal to "union" as the ultimate value. His strategy in this case was akin to that of the Inaugural orators: the union of the states was essential, not because of intrinsic merit, but because it was the means of preserving liberty. Webster asserted that it was "our own liberty, guarded by constitutions and secured by union," which he sought "to maintain and defend." The nullifiers, he insisted, would be "architects of ruin . . . blasters of human hopes," for "amidst the incantations and orgies of nullification, secession, disunion, and revolution would be celebrated the funeral rites of constitutional and republican liberty." At Gettysburg Abraham Lincoln called upon Americans to rededicate themselves "to the great task remaining," not simply in order to restore a powerful union, but in order to give "a new birth of freedom," to preserve a nation "conceived in Liberty."[15]

Obviously, a person can only adhere to one ultimate God term at a time. While the dominant God term in a society would seem to characterize its culture, the active competition between God terms would amount to a kind of cultural crisis. Indeed, Richard Weaver suggests that when an old value is "forced into competition with another concept, the human being suffers an almost intolerable sense of being lost."[16] Such was the case with the imperialism controversy in which the God term "empire" challenged the supremacy of the idea that America was the land of liberty. The participants in the dispute recognized the importance of the imperialism debate and considered it the "greatest question" to face the American people since the Civil War. Senator Henry M. Teller of Colorado feared that this controversy "would seriously embarrass the American people."[17] Americans had long sensed their responsibility as the example to the world, for as Thomas Jefferson reminded them, "the eyes of the friends of liberty and humanity" were fixed upon the United States.[18] Now they had to decide whether America was to be an empire or a republic, and even as they deliberated, John Winthrop's warning echoed from the deck of the *Arbella* in 1630: "The eies of all people are uppon Us, soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our god in this worke. . . . Wee shall shame the faces of many of god's worthy servants. . . ."[19] Given the crisis of cultural values that the imperialism issue evoked and the power of the past to legitimize present public policy, it is not surprising that both imperialists and anti-imperialists looked to earlier Americans for guidance. The ideology was a legacy, after all, and it was logical that the intent of the benefactors would be sought. And as the Presidents' oratory clearly shows, securing the sanc-

79

tion of the past was an established rhetorical tactic. The imperialist press chided Senator George F. Hoar of Massachusetts for his "rhetorical summons" of "statesmen of the past from their graves to testify against the present policy of expansion." Nevertheless, imperialists did not hesitate to call forth Andrew Jackson, James Monroe, and especially Thomas Jefferson—"the first Imperialist of the Republic."[20] The Declaration of Independence and the words of the Revolutionary leaders became key texts in the debate over the meaning, the purpose, and the future of America. Was it the duty of Americans to stand as an example to the world, preserving their land of liberty? Or were they to go forth and do God's work in the wilderness, "civilizing" and Christianizing Asia? Was the American empire continental or world-wide? Was it an empire of liberty or of commerce?

The ambiguity of the God terms "liberty" and "empire" had allowed the two to be fused together in the American ideology of the nineteenth century, permitting social cohesion through agreement on the purpose of America. The reality of overseas territory shattered this ambiguity and forced a new interpretation of the ideology. Each side in the imperialism debate saw (or claimed to see) its goals as consistent with the rhetoric of the American Revolution. Imperialists identified with the "spirit" of the founding fathers—men of vision who had launched a westward empire. Anti-imperialists insisted, instead, on the direct application of the sacred Revolutionary doctrine that all governments derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed." To violate this basic tenet of the Declaration of Independence, the anti-imperialists warned, would betray the American mission and endanger the land of liberty itself. Each camp, then, seized upon an aspect of the ideology and attempted to influence perceptions of current events by portraying the imperialism question through its own prism of the past.

As each side advocated its position and denounced the arguments of its opponents, the American ideology was fundamentally altered; the ideas of an "American empire" and of America as "the home of liberty" were transformed. Through the heat of debate, the God term of *empire* took on a more progressive meaning as it became associated with a cluster of values that seemed to embrace the future. This, in turn, suggested that the idea of liberty was somehow backward-looking and archaic—that *liberty* was a passive notion inappropriate for a nation that was entering its vigorous manhood and preparing to push forward into the world arena. The opponents of imperialism were forced to counter with a new, progressive version of the idea of liberty which could regain the primary position within the ideological hierarchy. Through a process of argument and counter-argument, Americans ultimately achieved a reconciliation between the God terms of liberty and empire. These two ideas, however, would be so dramatically changed by the imperialism controversy that the

alterations would have a profound effect on the rhetoric of American foreign policy in the twentieth century.

To imperialists the idea of an American empire became the controlling principle of the American ideology. The subordinate ideas of America as the home of liberty and Americans as the chosen people were defined in terms of how they promoted the rising empire. The imperialists' image of empire had changed considerably from the empire of liberty conceived by Thomas Paine. Revolutionary spokesmen had imagined an empire where the arts and sciences would flourish, where commerce and agriculture would produce prosperity.[21] In contrast, the imperialists' notion of empire included three interrelated types of expansion across the Pacific, each expressed in the military metaphor of "the march": the march of territory, the march of commerce, and the march of civilization. When Beveridge thrust the imperialism issue into the campaign of 1898, he summarized the new vision of the American ideology. The whole question of insular expansion, he insisted, was not merely a "party question." "It is," he continued, "an American question. It is a world question. Shall the American people continue their march toward the commercial supremacy of the world? Shall the free institutions broaden their blessed reign as the children of liberty wax in strength, until the empire of our principles is established over the hearts of all mankind?"[22]

According to the imperialists' argument, an overseas empire only continued the principle of American expansion. They were simply "obeying the same voice that Jefferson heard and obeyed, that Monroe heard and obeyed, that Seward heard and obeyed . . . and the march of the flag goes on!"[23] Beveridge did not wince at the conclusion of the imperialists' argument. America was at the dawn of its "full-grown manhood." If the principle of expansion meant a world-wide empire, if it meant "the Stars and Stripes over an Isthmian canal, over Hawaii, Cuba and the southern seas," Beveridge announced, "then let us meet that meaning with a mighty joy."[24] Thus, "the banner that Taylor unfurled in Texas and Fremont carried to the coast," would wave over the "gates of Asia."[25] But above all, he insisted, the flag would not be hauled down—"not one single foot of soil over which American civil authority is established will be abandoned. What we have, we hold."[26] Beveridge proposed exactly what Patrick Henry had most feared a hundred and ten years before—that empire, not liberty, should be great, controlling idea for America.

Territorial expansion was but one theme in the imperialists' new vision of the American empire. Like their Revolutionary forefathers, Beveridge and his allies spoke of an empire based upon commerce, which in turn would advance civilization. The imperialists continued to use the language of conquest as they explained that the march of the flag would allow America to "occupy new markets," to master the Pacific and achieve "commercial supremacy" in the world.[27] Commercial interests had been

81

central to America's decision to go to war with Spain; when President McKinley discussed the Cuban Revolution in his message to Congress on April 11, 1898, he relied upon economic arguments in three of his four justifications of American intervention.[28] Revolutionary orators had predicted that America would become a commercial power in the world; over a century later Beveridge proclaimed that "the dawning of the day of that dream's fulfillment is at hand."[29] Imperialists spoke of the Orient as "the Republic's future commercial salvation," because they believed that America's economic problems in the 1890s were symptoms of overproduction.[30] According to imperialists, the Philippines would open new markets and help the United States win its international struggle for life. American factories and farms, Beveridge warned, were producing more than the nation could consume; commercial expansion was the only cure for "a congested industrial situation." In short, he insisted, "we must get an ever increasing portion of foreign trade."[31] The Philippine Islands seemed a divinely planned solution to the problem of economic stagnation. With the acquisition of the insular colony, the American empire could continue to grow in commercial strength. The Hoosier imperialist posed no more than a rhetorical question when he asked his Indianapolis audience: "Shall we occupy new markets for what our farmers raise; our factories make, our merchants sell—aye, and please God, new markets for what our ships shall carry?" Never unsure of the Almighty's influence, Beveridge rejoiced at "the very predestination of reciprocity" which assured a lively trade of American goods for "the riches of the Philippines." Moreover, the wealth of these islands would be increased just as much as "American energy is greater than Spanish sloth."[32] In this portrait of a commercial empire, the Philippines served as the gateway to "China's illimitable markets."[33]

Imperialists gave great attention to the commercial advantages of a colonial empire, but at the same time they dismissed such pecuniary considerations as "insignificant" when compared with "the master argument" of advancing civilization.[34] Indeed, American commerce was proclaimed as the instrument which would expand western culture to the dark shores of Asia. Liberty, order, and civilization, Beveridge insisted, were "not planted by speeches, nor essays, nor editorials." Their seeds were carried "in the talons of Trade and planted by the fingers of Might."[35] David Hill, Assistant Secretary of State, suggested that territorial expansion into the Pacific ought not be thought of as imperialism, but as "the extension of civilization."[36] Beveridge best expressed the theme of the westward march of civilization when he opened the 1900 Republican "campaign for the West" with his Chicago address, "The Star of Empire." America, he claimed, was blessed by "the star of the empire of liberty and law, of commerce and communication, of social order and the gospel of our Lord—the star of the empire of the civilization of the world. Westward

that star of empire takes its course. And to-day it illuminates our path of duty across the Pacific into the islands and lands where Providence has called to us."[37]

America had no choice but to assume the burden of "civilizing" Asia, the imperialists argued, for colonies were essential in the struggle to establish America's position as the dominant civilization in the world. Indeed, Americans had a mandate from the Almighty to Christianize the East, to provide "orderly government over savage and senile peoples."[38] Theodore Roosevelt, William McKinley, and Albert Beveridge each implied that the very presence of an American administration would transform colonial territories, helping them advance toward civilization and Christianity. To turn away from this world duty, Roosevelt insisted, would cause America to forfeit "its right to struggle for a place among the peoples that shape the destiny of mankind."[39] Beveridge spoke of "that universal law of civilization" which required developed nations to "become colonizers"; and he added the ominous corollary that national "decline" occurred when a country abandoned "the policy of possession."[40]

The hard edges of these survival-of-the-fittest theories were smoothed by the argument that America could do God's work as it advanced Anglo-Saxon civilization. President McKinley, when speaking to a group of visiting Methodists, claimed to have decided to annex the Philippines only after several nights of prayer. Reflecting the politician's keen sense of American attitudes, McKinley related that after he had gone "down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance," it was revealed to him that "there was nothing left for us to do." America, he explained would "educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellowmen for whom Christ also died."[41]

The intertwined themes of expanding territory, commerce and civilization gave a progressive meaning to the God term *empire* and helped to thrust this idea into the primary position within the American ideology. In his maiden Senate speech on January 9, 1900, Beveridge assured his colleagues that the founding fathers "had the logic of progress." They had launched a consolidated nation on the North American continent, and it was the duty of the present generation to establish a "still mightier Republic."[42] When Beveridge debated Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis on New Year's Day, 1901, the Hoosier senator made imperialism seem to be synonymous with "progress." He informed his more conservative Republican opponent that with the new century had come "a new day." Civilization, Beveridge insisted, would never retreat from Shanghai, Hong Kong or Peking. "The regeneration of the world, physical as well as moral, has begun, and revolutions never move backward."[43] The expansionists' conceptualization of imperialism as a "march" similar to the "march to the Pacific" of 1848 gave a tone of inevitability to their pronouncements. The "march of the flag" seemed to be fulfilling Jef-

ferson's vision of "a rising nation, spread over a wide and fruitful land . . . advancing rapidly to destinies beyond the reach of the moral eye."[44] Senator Joseph Foraker of Ohio demanded to know who desired to stop the "march of civilization," and Beveridge described imperialism as "the advance guard of the Republic's onward march."[45] This strident, uncompromising metaphor appealed to a people who wanted to believe that Crévecoeur was correct when he claimed: "Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigour, and industry, which began long since in the east; they will finish the great circle."[46]

If anti-imperialists were to meet the challenge of "empire" they would have to show that America could have progress without imperialism—that anti-imperialism was not a "policy of reaction and retreat."[47] In short, they would have to show that *liberty* defined America's future as well as her past. In order to achieve this, opponents of empire had to alter the traditional notion of America as the example of liberty. The idea of liberty had to be imbued with a missionary zeal that could counter the allure of empire. Ironically, the anti-imperialists were to succeed too well. By transforming the concept of American liberty from a passive to a crusading idea, the enemies of empire made possible a reconciliation of the basic components of the American ideology. They made it possible for Americans to go forth into the world with the goal of establishing a global empire of liberty.

The anti-imperialist campaign slowly gained momentum after the Spanish-American War. In the intoxicating air of military conquest, jingoism passed as patriotism and the catch-words "flag," "destiny," and "duty" rang out like irrefutable arguments. But as the euphoria of victory ebbed and Americans found themselves fighting Filipino insurgents, William Jennings Bryan emerged as the national spokesman against imperialism. Between June 14, 1898, and February 22, 1899, Bryan delivered eight major speeches on imperialism, addressing audiences from Washington, D.C., to Denver, Colorado. His newspaper articles appeared regularly during 1899 in the *New York Journal,* and on August 8, 1900, he climaxed his campaign against imperialism with his speech accepting the Democratic presidential nomination. His acceptance speech—delivered in Albert J. Beveridge's hometown of Indianapolis—was literally a mosiac of Bryan's earlier speeches and essays, and it became a major Democratic campaign document. The speech summarized two themes that had become the basis of the anti-imperialist argument: that colonial imperialism violated the American doctrine of self-government, and that colonialism posed grave dangers to the American Republic. This address constituted a comprehensive and forceful rejection of imperialism; it could not be ignored. A month later Beveridge opened the Republican "campaign for the West" in Chicago with a direct attack on Bryan's address.[48]

Bryan claimed to sense a change in the public's mood. Americans, he

felt, now recognized that they were "face to face with a grave public problem," and they would not be "frightened away from the calm consideration of it."[49] The anti-imperialists pressed their case, charging that the advocates of empire had forgotten America's Revolutionary ideals and would "substitute the warship of mammon for the protection of the rights of man."[50] Bryan shared Thomas Paine's vision of America as "the ark" of liberty, not the warship of despotism.[51] Bryan's fellow anti-imperialists, particularly those in New England, were older public figures—men like Senator Goerge F. Hoar and Charles Francis Adams of Massachusetts—who thought of themselves as having been "brought up in the period when the revolutionary traditions lingered among us."[52]

The question of permanently annexing the Philippines posed a dilemma for anti-imperialists. Because they believed that self-government was "the controlling national idea," they insisted that the constitution followed the flag, giving American rights to all inhabitants of American land. On the other hand, they shared the imperialists' conviction that Filipinos, or "Maylays," were incapable of assuming the duties of American citizenship. Both camps assumed that "Asiatics" were an inferior people, but while the imperialists concluded that America's only course was to govern for "these children," the anti-imperialists concluded that in order to be faithful to its Revolutionary heritage, America must give the Filipinos their independence.[53] The crux of the imperialism dispute, then, turned upon the question of America's national purpose. Anti-imperialists declared that "the main purpose of the founders of our government," was not to launch an empire, but "to secure for themselves and their posterity the blessings of liberty."[54] Benjamin Harrison's remarks in his debate with Beveridge revealed that allegiance to the term "liberty" crossed party lines and spanned the generations. After tracing the evolution of the Revolutionary argument, which had shifted from the rights of Englishmen to the rights of man, Harrison explained that "our fathers" had placed the right of self-government on an "eternal throne." Since the Revolution, Harrison insisted, America had tried to be faithful to this legacy. He acknowledged that America's enslavement of "the black man" had been "an exception" to its Revolutionary ideology—"but God erased it with a sponge dipped in the white man's blood."[55] The anti-imperialist argument seemed to gain its real potency from the "self-evident truth" that governments derive their just powers "not from superior force, but from the consent of the governed."[56] To adopt imperialism, Bryan charged, would be to "surrender the doctrines that gave glory to 'Old Glory'." It would force Americans "to apologize" for the American Revolution, to hide the Declaration of Independence from the Filipinos, and "to kill those who, following the example of our forefathers, love liberty enough to fight for it."[57]

The imperialists' responses to the appeal for self-government inadvertently revealed their own need to believe that a colonial empire would be consistent with the ideals of the American Revolution. Senator Platt

steadfastly assured his colleagues that he would "not deny the principles of the Declaration of Independence"—he claimed only that the right of self-government had always been a qualified right.[58] Although they admitted that self-government might eventually be possible in the Philippines, advocates of American empire insisted that "no people know how to command until they have learned how to obey." Imperialists predicted that with Americans as their teachers, the Filipinos would someday pass "from anarchy to self-government." But this transition could only be achieved "through government from without."[59]

The opponents of colonial empire tended to agree with the imperialists concerning the limitations of the people of the Orient. Louisiana's Senator Donelson Caffery, for example, predicted that "in all human probability," the Filipinos would never "be fit for the glorious privileges, franchises, and functions of an American citizen."[60] The anti-imperialists, however, held a rather more optimistic view of the nature of mankind than did their opponents. They argued that while the self-government of the Philippines would certainly be marred by imperfections in comparison to American government, it would nevertheless be far superior to a government of colonial despotism. Henry M. Teller of Colorado reminded the Senate that they had no right to say: "Your standard [of government] is so low that you can not have a government of your own."[61] Andrew Carnegie, who backed his anti-imperialism convictions with an offer to purchase Philippine independence with a personal check for twenty million dollars, argued that the Filipinos were "by no means in the lowest scale—far from it—nor were they were much lower than the Cubans." Carnegie had no illusions that Philippine self-government would be without bloodshed or riot, but he insisted that the inevitable result would be "a government better suited to the people than any that our soldiers and their officers could ever give."[62]

As the anti-imperialists advocated independence for the Philippines, they attempted to recapture the term "progress," which their opponents had associated with "the march of the flag." To the extent that they succeeded in making the idea of liberty "progressive," they effected a radical change in the traditional meaning of the American ideology. True progress, Bryan insisted, would come with the expansion of liberty to Asian shores—with the American flag giving way "to a flag representing the idea of self-government."[63] Bryan described the real measure of American progress as "the growth of the principle of self-government." Once firmly planted in American soil, this idea had become "the overshadowing political fact of the nineteenth century." Instead of a "march of the flag" to China, Bryan described American's influence on the world as "the onward march of this idea."[64] In resolving the imperialism question, he believed, Americans would decide whether they would turn away from progress and return to the old European models of government. Would the old statue of liberty be sent back to France and be replaced with "a statue of William the Conqueror?" Bryan asked. Or

would the American people join with the Filipinos in placing in Manila harbor "a statue of Liberty enlightening the Orient?"[65] As Bryan argued against imperialism, he damned it as a policy of reaction and retrogression which would repudiate the very meaning of the American Revolution. The American empire foreseen by the founding fathers, he insisted, bore no relation to the overseas empire proposed by Beveridge. Through his dual themes of "progressive" liberty and "reactionary" empire, Bryan actually laid the groundwork for a reconciliation between the warring God terms. This reconciliation would allow liberty to retain its primary position in the ideology, but the new concept of liberty would lead Americans into world affairs with a fervor that the idea of empire never could have stimulated.

Bryan saw the imperialism question as more than a debate over forms of government. An overseas empire, he believed, would pose grave threats to the American republic, undermining the principle of self-government in the United States and creating again a nation half free and half slave. In accepting the Democratic nomination for president in 1900, Bryan warned that Americans could not "repudiate the principle of self-government in the Philippines without weakening that principle here."[66] An imperial policy, he continued, endorsed "brute force" as the only foundation of government and invited "the reign of a despot."[67] In a similar vein, the Democratic party of Iowa had predicted in 1899 that the "conquest of the Philippines" would ultimately result in the "obliteration of equality of rights and the assassination of democratic institutions."[68]

Far worse than the threat to the rights of Americans was the danger that the country would abandon its role as the moral leader of the world and adopt corrupt, European models of government, behavior, and values. Self-government, Bryan maintained, was America's "national idea"—the idea which had "a controlling influence upon the thought and character of the people." This idea defined America and gave it meaning; it was an idea that had "given eloquence to the orator and inspiration to the poet."[69] In contrast, the idea of imperialism was associated with the devil terms of "European," "colonial," and "foreign." To turn away from the idea of self-government and return to a European colonial policy, would be to reject the United State's unique identity—it would deny that America was the last best hope on earth. In Savannah, Ann Arbor, Indianapolis, and New York, Bryan hammered away at the European character of imperialism. It was a "European and monarchial doctrine," a foreign idea, and "the colonial idea of European nations."[70] Bryan rarely allowed his listeners to forget that the assumptions of colonial rule supported not the government of democracy, but the government of monarchy. Victoria, he pointed out, was Queen of England and Empress of India. Should we then make McKinley "President of the United States and Emperor of the Philippines?"[71] From Yale University, the pioneering sociologist William Graham Sumner joined Bryan in predicting that American imperialism would constitute "the conquest of the United States by Spain."[72]

When linguistically identified with Europe, imperialism became a dangerous entanglement in the controverises of the Old World. Bryan reminded his audiences of Washington's warning that America should not tie its destiny to "any part of Europe," nor entangle its "peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, [and] interest."[73] The anti-imperialists tapped a powerful force in public opinion by labeling colonialism as European. In the American ideology Europe was at best decayed, and at worst, utterly corrupt. From Thomas Paine to William Jennings Bryan, American spokesmen had testified to their profound suspicions of the Old World. Paine urged America to "steer clear of European contentions." He characterized Americans, not as leaving "the tender embraces" of mother England, but as having fled "from the cruelty of the monster."[74] Over a century later Senator Teller expected no challenge from his colleagues when he spoke of Europe "with all its evils, with all its vices, with all its cruelty."[75] To Senator Hoar the temptation to return to European models of government seemed almost the work of the devil, and immediately following Beveridge's famous maiden speech in the Senate the Massachusetts Senator rose to denounce "the youth charmed by the dream of empire." Hoar claimed that the very thought of America— "this brave young Republic"—listening to Beveridge's call for imperialism caused him to recall the Biblical passage relating to the temptation of Christ: "The devil taketh him up into an exceedingly high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them: and saith unto him all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan."[76]

If America accepted imperialism, Bryan predicted, it would lose the power of its moral leadership and would "descend to the level of empire and monarchies."[77] American colonialism would set human progress back a full century; it would mean that despotism had "recrossed the Atlantic."[78] Imperialism, Sumner warned, would force Americans to give up the goddess of liberty and transform the republic of "our fathers" into "another empire just after the fashion of all the old ones." America's democratic republic, he feared, would be regarded "as a mere transitional form like the colonial administration of earlier days."[79] After contemplating this possibility, Bryan asked a Denver audience: "Shall we turn to the old world again with the penitent prodigal's cry?" Cast in these terms, imperialism threatened the very meaning of America; it required America "to retrace its steps and, with shamed face and trembling voice, solicit a humble place among the servants of royalty."[80] It would, in short, nullify the American Revolution.

At first glance, it might appear that the imperialists and anti-expansionists were irreconcilably opposed. William Graham Sumner insisted that to establish a colonial empire would be "to abandon all American standards, [and] to put shame and scorn on all that our ancestors tried to build up here. . . ." Albert J. Beveridge summarized the imperialists'

response to their critics in a single sentence: they were a "feeble company of little Americans, doubters of the rightousness, wisdom and power of the American people, infidels to American destiny, opposers of American progress."[81] Yet, each side was adjusting its objectives and its rhetoric. At the turn of the century Americans were willing to give up neither their belief that America was the land of liberty, nor their dream of a rising empire. Harvard scholar Ernest May, perhaps the dean of historians of American imperialism, has noted that the "accepted meanings of American traditions changed during these years," and as they changed they "had much to do with shaping men's convictions."[82] This modification in American values and beliefs was essentially a *rhetorical reconciliation* which allowed both imperialists and anti-imperialists to get on with the mission of America. The concept of rhetorical reconciliation has been defined as "a tendency, deliberate or not, to reconcile inconsistent practices and values by associating them rhetorically. In other words, it seeks to achieve the appearance of compromise and accommodation by semantic slight-of-hand (or mind) that consists of a tendency to use words to justify, rather than to define, inconsistencies."[83] Expansionists and anti-expansionists reached a reconciliation that not only allowed them to retain their Revolutionary ideals as they dealt with the realities of foreign affairs, but also allowed them once again to view *liberty* as the dominant term of American culture and to preserve *empire* as a subordinate and supporting value. In Theodore Roosevelt's words, Americans could resolve "to serve high ideals, yet to use practical methods."[84] As the rhetorical reconciliation emerged, imperialists quieted their calls for unending territorial expansion and proposed an American mission of promoting liberty in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Philippines. Anti-imperialists retreated from their early demands that the United States immediately abandon its insular empire, and instead emphasized the duty of America to protect these infant republics from encroachment by other foreign powers. This reconciliation profoundly altered the American ideology and established the basis for the rhetoric of American foreign policy during the next century. America was no longer merely the example to the world—it would have to assume the active role of ensuring the survival of liberty around the globe.

Imperialists discovered that once the war fever of 1898 had subsided, American public opinion made further expansion impossible. Secretary of State John Jay acknowledged to a friend in the spring of 1899 that the United States government would make no attempt to obtain Chinese territory because "we do not think that the public opinion of the United States would justify this Government in taking part in the great game of spoliation now going on."[85] When Bryan focused upon the imperialism issue during the campaign of 1900, Mark Hanna established a Republican campaign based upon domestic prosperity. Roosevelt and McKinley retreated

from full-fledged imperialism, stressing the importance of commercial rather than territorial expansion.[86] Joseph Foraker, Ohio's imperialist Senator, denied that anyone "in this Chamber" proposed a permanent colonial system. Attempting to treat the imperialism controversy as a theoretical dispute, Foraker insisted that while the United States had the right to establish colonies, it need not necessarily exercise that power.[87]

Even the leading advocate of empire, Albert J. Beveridge, professed to see empire as only the instrument of liberty. In speech after speech, he paid homage at the sacred alter of American liberty, characterizing the people of the United States as "the propagandists and not the misers of liberty." Through its history, he rejoiced, America had always pitched "the tents of liberty farther westward."[88] Beveridge reconciled colonial administration and liberty by speaking of "the substance of liberty"—the American institutions of good government, public education, and domestic order. While self-government was the most elevated instrument of liberty, he explained, it could be safely employed by Filipinos only after they had learned from the American example and "mastered the alphabet of freedom."[89] Beveridge sincerely believed that expansion across the Pacific gave America the opportunity to promote "the great eternal ends" of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. These great ends, he warned, could not be accomplished if Americans applied "dogmatic" theories which would "ignore concrete conditions." Instead, America should adapt its ideals to the realities of their new lands. This "fitting of means to ends," this "adjustment of measures to conditions," he explained, was "the heart of Americanism."[90]

While the imperialists could not reconcile themselves or their rhetoric to the loss of American control over the Philippines, they could endorse the abstract principle of self-government in overseas territories. American colonial administration, they argued, was essential if the natives were to be educated "gradually toward self-government."[91] The imperialists' belief that they were promoting the cause of liberty was illustrated by the banquet of the Home Market Club of Boston on February 16, 1899. With President McKinley as the main speaker, the four thousand guests at this gigantic feast consumed half a ton of fish under the watchful portraits of American "liberators": Washington, Lincoln and McKinley. In introducing the President, Postmaster General Charles Emory Smith pointed out that while Lincoln had freed only four million slaves, McKinley had "lifted 10,000,000 unto light and freedom."[92]

Anti-imperialists also employed rhetoric to reconcile their ideals of liberty with the reality of the United States' possession of overseas territories. Simple retreat from the Philippines, they recognized, would be just as impossible politically as would be further territorial expansion into China. When Beveridge proclaimed that the founding fathers had "planted no sluggard people, passive while the world's work calls"—that they had

"unfurled no retreating flag"—he spoke the sentiments of a people who identified their nation with progress.[93] Anti-expansionists recoiled when Maine's jingoist Senator William P. Frye offered a theological interpretation of the Philippine question, asserting that "God opened the door, pushed us in and closed it." But realists on both sides of the controversy recognized that once America entered the world arena as a major power, "no man on earth or angel in heaven" could force it out of world affairs.[94] Jacob Gould Schurman, president of Cornell University, had vigorously opposed expansion while serving on McKinley's Philippines Commission. But after the annexation in December of 1898, Schurman turned his attention to the "mighty" and "awful" fact of America's "actual sovereignty over and responsibility for the Philippine Islands." Dismissing "the policy of scuttle" as irresponsible, Schurman sounded curiously like Albert Beveridge as he told his Cornell students in 1899 that the mission of America was "to educate and elevate the Filipinos and aid them in governing themselves."[95] Schurman's speech indicated that anti-imperialists had modified their ideal of liberty so that it could continue to guide America while she temporarily held overseas territory. At the same time, the God term of liberty had been redefined so that it possessed a progressive character—so that it became a mandate for action rather than a call for retreat.

From the beginning of the imperialism controversy, anti-expansionists had gloried in the power of the American example. Like Henry Clay, they viewed America as "the rallying point of human freedom."[96] Bryan argued that America encouraged the progress of liberty through "its silent example" which had already "been an inspiration to millions."[97] The anti-imperialists shared the flattering notion, given voice by George Bancroft nearly seventy years earlier, that "the defense of public liberty in our own halls of legislation penetrates the plains of Poland, is echoed along the mountains of Greece, and pierces the darkest night of eastern despotism."[98] As the opponents of empire contemplated the fate of America's new territories, the tradition of the American example seemed to justify a more direct role in the defense of liberty. With European powers anxious to acquire the Philippines, the idea of America's example merely "casting its influence" in support of liberty seemed woefully inadequate, even to leading anti-imperialists.[99] Senator Teller characterized the Spanish-American War as a war for "human freedom" and vowed not to abandon the Philippines to the mercies of foreign powers. "We cannot stop," he insisted. "We commenced this great work of humanity, and we are bound to carry it on. . . ."[100]

As a first step, Teller proposed that America should give Filipinos "the protection of the flag."[101] In a similar vein, Senator Hoar urged that the United States apply the Monroe Doctrine to the Philippines, and Bryan proposed an American protectorate which would "guard them from out-

side interference."[102] In accepting the 1900 Democratic presidential nomination, Bryan pledged that "if elected" he would "protect the Filipinos" and "guard them against molestation from without."[103] In order to promote liberty in the world, Senator Teller also explained, the United States would have to control the foreign affairs of its protectorates. Beveridge summarized this concept when he predicted that America would ultimately become the arbitrator of world disputes—"the most powerful of powers and most righteous of judges." Such sentiments hardly seemed far from Bryan's ideal that the United States would become "the greatest republic on earth, the greatest republic of history," and would wield its influence "in behalf of truth and justice."[104]

Expansionists and anti-expansionists, of course, still disagreed over exactly when Filipinos would be ready for self-government. But each side had adjusted its rhetoric so that it was possible to reconcile the old American ideology with the nation's new role in world affairs. Both sides seemed to endorse the same ideal: America as the promoter of liberty in the world. As the imperialism debate progressed, Americans turned away—as their Presidents had in the Inaugural Addresses—from John Quincy Adams' dictum that the United States was "the well-wisher to freedom and independence of all," but "the champion and vindicator only of her own." As they looked to the Revolutionary generation, Americans seemed to hear, not Washington's "Farewell Address," but Thomas Paine's appeal that "the cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind."[105] Like a young Fourth of July orator in Boston in 1826, Americans believed that they had a responsibility to act "not merely for ourselves but for all the oppressed of all nations."[106]

Woodrow Wilson was fond of remarking that it was not men, but ideas, that interested and worried him—"Ideas live, men die."[107] But not all ideas survive for two hundred years as the watchwords of a nation. Those that do live on must be adapted through rhetoric so that they can serve in new circumstances and situations. The rhetoric of the imperialism controversy performed this transforming function for the ideas of the American Revolution. In a type of cultural dialectic, the expansionists and anti-expansionists brought the ideals of "empire" and "liberty" into opposition. Neither ideal emerged intact from the dispute; instead, the orators created a new version of the American mission. Thus, the imperialism controversy served to link the Revolutionary ideology with American foreign policy in the twentieth century. The basic principle of the Declaration of Independence—self-determination and self-government—lived on as one of the justifications for American involvement in world affairs. This transformation of the American ideology made it possible for Woodrow Wilson to characterize American intervention in the First World War as an effort to make the world "safe for democracy"—as an act of a people seeking "no selfish ends," but simply performing their role as "the cham-

pions of liberty." Twenty-five years later, on D-Day, General Dwight D. Eisenhower would echo Wilson's words when he told the Allied forces that "the prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you."[108]

The Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War were each at least partially justified in terms of America's mission as the protector of liberty in the world. Just two years after the end of the Second World War George C. Marshall told a war-weary nation that it must "face up to the vast responsibilities which history has clearly placed upon our country."[109] And, incredibly, Americans did try. The idea of America's new world mission certainly did not mask the realities of economic interest and military power, but it did provide a moral interpretation of American foreign policy. By 1960 this revised idea of mission had become deeply rooted in Ameridan values. When Richard Nixon asserted in the "Great Debates" that "America's destiny" was "not just to keep freedom for ourselves but to extend it to all the world," John Kennedy immediately challenged: "Are we doing enough today?"[110] In 1961 Kennedy seemed to lay the groundwork for America's tragic involvement in Vietnam when he pledged that "we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship. . . to assure the survival and success of liberty."[111] Like the imperialism controversy, the Vietnam War forced a reassessment of America's world mission. And it may also have forced a new rhetorical reconciliation of America's Revolutionary ideals with the realities of a changing world.

The ideology, then, entered the twentieth century modified but intact, serving still as the focal point of national self-evaluation. The second half of the century, however, was to be fraught with tests of the ideology and the ability of rhetoric to maintain the relevance of the Revolutionary legacy. Certainly a severe strain was placed on American faith and self-confidence by the challenge of the civil rights movement. The role of a conservative rhetoric in the struggle for reform is examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

NOTES

[1]Albert J. Beveridge, "The March of the Flag [Indianapolis, Sept. 16, 1898]," in Beveridge, *The Meaning of the Times and Other Speeches* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1908), pp. 47, 50-51. For the audience response to the speech, see Claude Bowers, *Albert J. Beveridge and the Progressive Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1932), pp. 73-76, cited hereafter as Bowers, *Beveridge*.

[2]John Quincy Adams, "Mr. Adams' Oration [July 4, 1821]," *Niles Weekly Register* [Baltimore], 20 (July 21, 1821), 329-330.

[1]See Robert P. Hay, "Freedom's Jubilee: One Hundred Years of the

Fourth of July," Diss. Kentucky 1967, pp. 172-202. For an excellent discussion of Americans' doubts about their ability to fulfill their duty, see Paul C. Nagel, *This Sacred Trust: American Nationality, 1798-1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 325-327.

[6]"Farewell Address," in Glenn R. Capp, ed., *Famous Speeches in American History* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), p. 40.

[7]"Against the Constitution," in *American Forum: Speeches on Historic Issues, 1788-1900*, eds. Ernest J. Wrage and Barnet Baskerville (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 14.

[8]Speech in the House of Representatives, *Annals of the Congress of the United States* (May 10, 1820), 16th Congress, 1st Session, p. 2227, hereafter cited as Clay, *Annals of the Congress*, (May 10, 1820).

[9]J. Q. Adams, "Oration," p. 331.

[10]Ernest R. May, ed., *American Foreign Policy* (New York: Braziller, 1963), p. 13.

[11]Beveridge to Charles G. Dawes, May 10, 1898, quoted in Bowers, *Beveridge*, p. 71. For a discussion of 1898 as the key date of America's emergence as a world power, see Norman A. Graebner, "The Year of Transition (1898)," in Norman A. Graebner, ed., *An Uncertain Tradition: American Secretaries of State in the Twentieth Century* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), pp. 1-21.

[12]E. Berkeley Tompkins, *Anti-Imperialism in the United States: The Great Debate, 1890-1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), p. 2. Historians of the New and Old Left tend to define imperialism in broad terms of "national influence." While this broad definition may be more realistic in discussing contemporary international relations, it was not the sort of imperialism debated in 1898-1900. See Marilyn Blatt Young, ed., *American Expansionism: The Critical Issues* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1973), pp. xii-xiv; and Richard Koebner and Helmut Dan Schmitt, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840-1960* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. xiii-xxv.

[13]For a convenient summary of interpretations of American imperialism by Richard Hofstadter, Julius Pratt, Frederick Merk and others, see Ernest R. May, *American Imperialism: A Speculative Essay* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), pp. 229-230. For the anti-imperialist movement, see (in addition to Tompkins) Fred Harvey Harrington, "The Anti-Imperialist Movement in the United States, 1898-1900," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 22 (Sept. 1935), 211-230; and David B. Schirmer, *Republic or Empire: American Resistance to the Philippine War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1972).

[14]Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives and a Rhetoric of Motives* (Cleveland: World, 1962), pp. 355, 105.

[15]Richard Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (Chicago: Regnery, 1953), p. 212.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 212; and Burke, p. 554.

[15]Daniel Webster, "The Constitution Not a Compact Between Sovereign States [Feb. 16, 1833]," in *American Forum*, pp. 134, 148; and Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address," in *Famous Speeches in American History*, p. 89.

[16]Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric*, p. 213.

[17]*Congressional Record* (Dec. 20, 1898), 55th Congress, 3rd Session, vol. 32, pt. 1, p. 326; cited hereafter as Senator Teller, *Congressional Record* (Dec. 20, 1898).

[18]Thomas Jefferson to Richard Price, March 21, 1785, in *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian P. Boyd, *et al.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), VIII, 53.

[19]John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity [1630]," *Old South Leaflets, No. 207* (Boston: Old South Association, n.d.), p. 20.

[20]"Senator Hoar's Speech," *The Outlook*, 64 (April 28, 1900), p. 948; and Beveridge, "The March of the Flag," pp. 50-51.

[21]Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* [3rd ed.]. . . *and a Dialogue Between the Ghost of General Montgomery Just Arrived From the Elysian Fields; and an American Delegate, in a Wood Near Philadelphia: On the Grand Subject of American Independency* (Philadelphia: R. Bell, 1776), pp. 15-16. This quotation is from the *Dialogue*, which has independent pagination.

[22]Beveridge, "The March of the Flag," p. 48.

[23]*Ibid.*, p. 51.

[24]Beveridge, "Grant the Practical [Middlesex Club, Boston, April 17, 1898]," *The Meaning of the Times*, pp. 46, 43.

[25]Beveridge, "The March of the Flag," p. 48.

[26]Beveridge, "Conservatism: The Spirit of National Self-Restraint [Chicago, Feb. 22, 1902]," *The Meaning of the Times*, p. 173.

[27]See Beveridge, "The March of the Flag," pp. 48-54; and Beveridge, "The Command of the Pacific [San Francisco, Sept. 15, 1902]," in *The Meaning of the Times*, p. 190.

[28]U. S. House of Representatives, *Message of the President of the United States Communicated to the Two Houses of Congress on the Relations of the United States to Spain by Reason of Warfare in the Island of Cuba, April 11, 1898*, House Doc. 405, 55th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1898), pp. 3-4, 11.

[29]Thomas Welsh, *An Oration Delivered March 5, 1783, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770* (Boston: John Gill, 1783), p. 18; George Richards Minot, *An Oration Delivered March 5, 1782, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770* (Boston: B. Edes and Sons, 1782), p. 15; and Beveridge, "Grant the Practical," p. 43.

[30]Beveridge, "Command of the Pacific," p. 188.

[31]Beveridge, "Grant the Practical," pp. 43, 46; also see Beveridge, "The March of the Flag," p. 42; and Beveridge, "The Command of the Pacific," p. 190.

[32]Beveridge, "The March of the Flag," pp. 48, 53, 52.

[33]Beveridge, "Our Philippine Policy [U.S. Senate, Jan. 9, 1900]," in *The Meaning of the Times*,p. 59.

[34]Beveridge, "Star of Empire [Chicago, Sept. 25, 1900]," in *The Meaning of the Times*, p. 128.

[35]Beveridge, "Grant the Practical," p. 44.

[36]David J. Hill, "The War and the Extension of Civilization," *Forum*, 26 (Feb. 1899), 650-655.

[37]Beveridge, "Star of Empire," pp. 118-119.

[38]*Ibid.*, pp. 132-133.

[39]Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life: Speech Before the Hamilton Club, Chicago, April 10, 1899," in Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life* (1899; rpt. New York: Century, 1901), p. 16.

[40]Beveridge, "Star of Empire," pp. 131-132.

[41]"McKinley Explains Acquisition," in Daniel M. Smith, ed., *Major Problems in Diplomatic History: Documents and Readings* (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1964), p. 287.

[42]Beveridge, "Our Philippine Policy," pp. 81, 85-86.

[43]Quoted in Bowers, *Beveridge*, p. 143.

[44]Thomas Jefferson, "Inaugural Address, March 4, 1801," *Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States from George Washington 1789 to Richard Milhous Nixon 1973* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1974), p. 13.

[45]Senator Foraker, *Congressional Record* (Jan. 11, 1899), 55th Congress, 3rd Session, vol. 32, pt. 1, p. 570, hereafter cited as Senator Foraker, *Congressional Record* (Jan. 11, 1899); Beveridge, "The Command of the Pacific," p. 199.

[46][Michel-Guillaume Jean de Crévecoeur] J. Hector St. John, *Letters from an American Farmer: Describing Certain Provincial Situations, Manners and Customs, not Generally Known; and Conveying Some Idea of the Late and Present Interior Circumstances of the British Colonies in North America. Written for the Information of a Friend in England* (London: Thomas Davis, 1782), p. 52.

[47]Beveridge, "Star of Empire," p. 119.

[48]See Bryan, "Imperialism [Indianapolis, Aug. 8, 1900]," in William Jennings Bryan, *Bryan on Imperialism: Speeches, Newspaper Articles and Interviews* (1900; rpt. New York: Arno, 1970), pp. 69-92, cited hereafter as Bryan, "Imperialism." See also Beveridge, "Star of Empire," p. 119.

[49]Bryan, "What Next?" *New York Journal*, Feb. 12, 1899, reprinted in *Bryan on Imperialism*, p. 57.

[50]Bryan, "Imperialism," p. 69.

[51]Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* [3rd ed.] . . . *and a Dialogue*, p. 15. This reference is to the *Dialogue* which has independent pagination.

[52]*Boston Evening Transcript*, Feb. 15, 1900, quoted in Schirmer, *Republic or Empire*, p. 8.

[53]See Bryan's speech on Washington Day (Feb. 22, 1899), Washington D. C., in *Bryan on Imperialism*, p. 22, cited hereafter as Bryan, "Washington Day Speech"; and Beveridge, "Our Philippine Policy," p. 76. For an extended discussion of the racist assumptions of both imperialists and anti-imperialists, see Christopher Lasch, "The Anti-Imperialists, the Philippines, and the Inequality of Man," *Journal of Southern History*, 24 (August 1958), 319-331.

[54]Bryan, "Washington Day Speech," p. 22.

[55]Harrison quoted in Bowers, *Beveridge*, p. 143.

[56]Bryan, speech delivered at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition, Omaha, June 14, 1898, in *Bryan on Imperialism*, p. 4.

[57]Bryan, speech before a joint meeting of the Women's Bimetallic League, the Lancaster County Bimetallic League, and the University Bimetallic Club, Lincoln, Nebraska, Dec. 23, 1898, in *Bryan on Imperialism*, p. 7; Bryan, "Washington Day Speech," p. 22; and Bryan, "Imperialism," pp. 82, 85.

[58]*Congressional Record* (Dec. 19, 1898), 55th Congress, 3rd Session, vol. 32. pt. 1, p. 297.

[59]"Expansion But Not Imperialism," *The Outlook*, 64 (March 24, 1900), 663-664.

[60]*Congressional Record* (Jan. 6, 1899), 55th Congress, 3rd Session, vol. 32, pt. 1, p. 436. See also Senator Teller, *Congressional Record* (Dec. 20, 1898), p. 329.

[61]Senator Teller, *Congressional Record* (Dec. 20, 1898), p. 329.

[62]Andrew Carnegie, "Americanism *versus* Imperialism," *North American Review*, 168 (Jan. 1899), 13. For the offer of twenty million dollars, see Robert L. Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1890-1900* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 165.

[63]Bryan, "Imperialism," p. 89.

[64]*Ibid.*, p. 85.

[65]Bryan, speech delivered at a Democratic banquet in St. Paul, Minn., on Feb. 14, 1899, in *Bryan on Imperialism*, p. 17.

[66]Bryan, "Imperialism," p. 74.

[67]*Ibid.*, p. 83.

[68]*American Monthly Review of Reviews*, 20 (Sept. 1899), 263.

[69]Bryan, "Naboth's Vineyard [Denver, Jan. 17, 1899], in *Bryan on Imperialism*, p. 16.

[70]Bryan, speech delivered at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Feb. 18, 1899, in *Bryan on Imperialism*, p. 19, cited hereafter as Bryan, "University of Michigan Speech"; Bryan, "Interview at Savannah [Dec.

13, 1898]," in *Bryan on Imperialism*, p. 5. Also see Bryan, "Will It Pay?" *New York Journal*, Jan. 15, 1899, reprinted in *Bryan on Imperialism*, p. 39; Bryan, "Jefferson Versus Imperialism," *New York Journal*, Dec. 25, 1898, reprinted in *Bryan on Imperialism*, pp. 25-26; and Bryan, "Imperialism," p. 79.

[71]Bryan, speech delivered before the Bryan League of Chicago, Jan. 7, 1899, in *Bryan on Imperialism*, p. 12.

[72]William G. Sumner, "The Conquest of the United States by Spain," *Yale Law Journal*, 8 (Jan. 1899), 168.

[73]Washington, "Farewell Address," p. 40; Bryan, "Will It Pay?" p. 42.

[74]Paine, *Common Sense* [3rd ed.] . . . *and a Dialogue*, pp. 38, 34. This reference is to *Common Sense* which has independent pagination.

[75]Senator Teller, *Congressional Record* (Dec. 20, 1898), p. 327.

[76]Senator Hoar, *Congressional Record* (Jan. 9, 1900), 56th Congress, 1st Session, vol. 33, pt. 1, p. 712.

[77]Bryan, "The Puerto Rican Tariff Law," *New York Journal*, Feb. 11, 1900, reprinted in *Bryan on Imperialism*, p. 66.

[78]Bryan, "Washington Day Speech," p. 21; also see Bryan's speech to the Nebraska Traveling Men's Bryan Club, Lincoln, Nebraska, Dec. 31, 1898, in *Bryan on Imperialism*, p. 8.

[79]Sumner, "The Conquest of the United States by Spain," p. 192.

[80]Bryan, "Naboth's Vineyard," p. 15.

[81]Beveridge, "The Command of the Pacific," p. 199; and Sumner, "The Conquest of the United States by Spain," p. 193.

[82]May, *American Imperialism*, p. 227.

[83]Max J. Skidmore, *Word Politics: Essays on Language and Politics* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Freel, 1972), p. 9. For an extended case in rhetorical reconciliation, see Skidmore, *Medicare and the American Rhetoric of Reconciliation* (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1970).

[84]Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life," p. 21.

[85]John Jay to Paul Dana, March 16, 1899, in *The Life and Letters of John Jay*, ed. William Roscoe Thayer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915), II, 241.

[86]May, *American Imperialism*, pp. 211-212; also see Thomas A. Bailey, "Was the Election of 1900 a Mandate on Imperialism?" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 24 (June 1937), 43-52; and Schirmer, *Republic or Empire*, pp. 208-209.

[87]Senator Foraker, *Congressional Record* (Jan. 11, 1899), p. 571.

[88]Beveridge, "The March of the Flag," pp. 47, 50.

[89]Beveridge, "Star of Empire," p. 139; and Beveridge, "Our Philippine Policy," pp. 71-72.

[90]Beveridge, "Conservatism," pp. 170-171; and Beveridge, "Our Philippine Policy," p. 79.

[91]Beveridge, "Our Philippine Policy," p. 78; *American Monthly Review of Reviews*, 20 (Sept. 1899), 264; and Beveridge, "Star of Empire," p. 136.

[92]*Boston Evening Transcript*, Feb. 17, 1899, quoted in Schrimer, *Republic or Empire*, pp. 136-137; and *Springfield* [Mass.] *Daily Republican*, Feb. 13, 1899, p. 3.

[93]Beveridge, "Our Philippine Policy," p. 85.

[94]Senator Frye quoted in the *Literary Digest*, 19 (Aug. 19, 1899), 213.

[95]Jacob Gould Schurman, "The Problems of Territorial Expansion," *American Monthly Review of Reviews*, 20 (Nov. 1899), 568, 572.

[96]Clay, *Annals of the Congress* (May 10, 1820), p. 2227.

[97]Bryan, "Imperialism," p. 92; Bryan, "The Puerto Rican Tariff Law," p. 66.

[98]George Bancroft, "The Office of the People in Art, Government, and Religion [1835]," *American Forum*, p. 73; also see Bryan, "Imperialism," p. 85.

[99]Bryan, "The Puerto Rican Tarriff Law," pp. 66-67.

[100]Senator Teller, *Congressional Record* (Dec. 20, 1898), p. 327.

[101]*Ibid*, p. 330.

[102]Bryan, "University of Michigan Speech," p. 19; and Senator Hoar quoted in *The Outlook*, 64 (April 28, 1900), 948.

[103]Bryan, "Imperialism," p. 90.

[104]Senator Teller, *Congressional Record* (Dec. 20, 1898), pp. 327, 329; Beveridge, "Star of Empire," p. 143; and Bryan, "Ideal Destiny of America," in *The Credo of the Commoner: William Jennings Bryan*, ed. Franklin Modisett (Los Angeles: Occidental College, 1968), p. 81.

[105]J. Q. Adams, "Oration," p. 331; and Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* [3rd ed.] . . . *and a Dialogue*, p. vi. This reference is to *Common Sense* which has independent pagination.

[106]David L. Child, *An Oration Pronounced Before the Republicans of Boston, July 4, 1826* (Boston: Josiah B. Clough, 1826), p. 39.

[107]Woodrow Wilson quoted in John F. Wilson, "Rhetorical Echoes of a Wilsonian Idea," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 43 (Oct. 1957), 271.

[108]Woodrow Wilson, "Declaration of War, April 2, 1917," *Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, ed. Albert Shaw (New York: Review of Reviews Corporation, 1924), I, 381; Woodrow Wilson, "Address to the Senate Presenting the Peace Treaty, July 10, 1919," *Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, II, 712; and Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Order of the Day," *New York Times*, June 6, 1944, p. 3.

[109]George C. Marshall, "European Unity [Harvard University, June 5, 1947]," *Vital Speeches*, 13 (July 1, 1947), 554.

[110]Richard M. Nixon and John F. Kennedy, "Fourth Debate, Oct. 21, 1960," in *The Great Debates: Background—Perspective—Effects*, ed. Sidney Kraus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), pp. 413, 415.

[111]John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address, Jan. 20, 1961," *Inaugural Addresses*, p. 268.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNFINISHED REVOLUTION

In August of 1963, on the eve of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, W. E. B. DuBois died at age ninety-five in his self-imposed African exile. Embittered by the long, painful, and frustrating struggle for the rights of blacks, DuBois was considered radical by whites who tended to prefer the less jarring rhetoric of Booker T. Washington. But DuBois, in rejecting Washington's position as a surrender of black civil and political rights, argued that "manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses; . . . a people who voluntarily surrender such respect, or cease striving for it, are not worth civilizing."[1] Fighting against the overpoweringly brutal forces of hostility or indifference, blacks had made very little progress toward real freedom in the century which followed their supposed emancipation. Held in a tight grip of political, social, and economic domination, they relied on white sympathizers to aid them in their quest for equality and justice. But the 1960s saw a new kind of black activism emerge. The struggle for self-respect, for black identity, and for the recognition of fundamental human rights was led by black spokesmen and called upon the massive support of the black community itself.

The civil rights movement was a severe test of the elasticity and durability of the ideology and its ability to generate an applicable rhetoric. Traditional rhetorical strategies were formulated within the given context of public discussion. In such a setting, the relative merits of the basic tenets of the ideology could be evaluated, as in the imperialism controversy, or the ideology itself could be upheld as a standard. Opposing sides would face the rhetorical task of devising arguments designed to prove their own closer identification with that ideology.

Relations between the races, however, were poisoned by a bitter history and strongly flavored by coercion. There was little likelihood that black leaders could successfully employ traditional tactics to gain the attention of white audiences and the confidence of black audiences. Furthermore, intimidation by the agencies of the power structure made normal public de-

bate almost impossible. Indeed, opponents of civil rights professed to see any argument for black equality as subversive of American values. Racist rhetoric took as a fundamental assumption that black aspirations would rent the fabric of American life. When Oliver Brown's historic battle with the Topeka Board of Education finally led in 1954 to the Supreme Court's decision ordering desegragation of the public schools, white extremists in the South saw deep and sinister forces at work. Judge Tom Brady believed that the action was taken "in behalf of Communist Russia," reasoning that if "the South, the stronghold of democracy, would be destroyed, then the nation could be destroyed."[2] But perhaps the most persistent claim made by southern racists was that, in fact, there was no discrimination against blacks, that blacks were quite happy with things as they were. Segregation, Senator James Eastland told the Senate, was supported by both races "who dwell side by side under harmonious conditions." The Senator from Mississippi was prepared to go even further; he could state unequivocally that "There is no racial hatred in the South. The negro race is not an oppressed race."[3] Surely most blacks knew, as anyone who would read or watch television was soon to know, the patent absurdity of such an assertion. The hate in the screaming faces of the mothers in Little Rock, Arkansas, the vicious reaction by much of the white establishment to constitutional protest—what Anthony Lewis of the *New York Times* called the "corruption of the processes of law"—and the record of brutal intimidation by police, combined to make the plight of black people desperate.[4] And so the tactics used by civil rights activists in the 1960s were not those of ordinary public discussion. Explicit arguments based clearly on the prevailing ideology were not yet appropriate to the situation.

The boycotts, sit-ins, and demonstrations of the late fifties and particularly the early sixties grew in frequency and militancy until there could be no doubt that blacks demanded change and were prepared to confront the most implacable hostility to bring it about. Between May and August of 1963 there were over 900 demonstrations throughout the country, both North and South.[5] Although blacks had been striving for their freedom for generations, the civil rights movement might be said to have begun in earnest at a Woolworth lunch counter on North Elm Street in Greensboro, North Carolina. The four students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College who "sat-in" on that February afternoon in 1960 rocked the country. The sit-ins spread to Durham, Nashville, Atlanta. The Southern Regional Council reported that within seven months of the beginning of the sit-ins nearly 70,000 had participated in protests in the North as well as the South and an estimated 3,600 had been arrested.[6] Three activist civil rights groups took leading roles in encouraging blacks to shape their own destiny. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), founded in 1941 and a pioneer in direct action, was joined by Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which was born of the 1957 Montgomery bus boycott, and by the fiercely independent Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). James Farmer,

arguing that people had to control their own lives, observed that "You cannot engineer freedom."[7] Freedom had to be won by oneself, and blacks set about to do that. Direct action was to be the distinguishing tactic of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. But it was, of course, only a part of the overall strategy designed to bring the white community into confrontation with its own conscience—with its own ideals. For such a task, the ideology proved to be a fruitful storehouse of invention. Certainly the rhetorical culmination of the strategy was the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963.

In the early 1940s, when the federal government planned to exclude blacks from jobs in the defense industry, the original March on Washington was devised by A. Philip Randolph. Randolph believed that nonviolent, direct action was the most fruitful course for a minority group to take. He organized sit-ins similar to those which became the hallmark of civil rights agitation twenty years later. In 1941 Randolph threatened to bring 200,000 black people to Washington in a gigantic protest march against job discrimination. Eleanor Roosevelt set up meetings between her husband and Randolph and on June 25, 1941 the President issued Executive Order 8802 which barred discrimination by firms awarded government contracts.[8] In the words of Bayard Rustin, Randolph had "developed the strategy of mass protest," and it was successful. His method was "a political tactic which has since become common-place in the Negro Movement."[9]

It was Randolph who conceived and became Director of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963. He was joined by Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young, the leaders of the conservative National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Urban League, by Dr. King representing the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and by John Lewis and James Farmer of the more militant SNCC and CORE. At the urging of Wilkins and Young, the sponsorship was enlarged to include white civil rights leaders: Mathew Ahmann of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, Eugene Carson Blake of the National Council of Churches, Rabbi Joachim Prinz of the American Jewish Congress, and Walter Reuther of the United Automobile Workers. Bayard Rustin, who became Deputy Director of the March, was the organizing and integrating force.[10]

The Marchers' goals were political and economic. Specifically, they hoped that the March would help bring about:

(1) passage of President Kennedy's civil rights bill;
(2) integration of all public schools by the end of 1963;
(3) a government sponsored program to "train and place all unemployed workers—Negroes or white—in meaningful and dignified jobs at decent wages";
(4) a federal fair employment law prohibiting all job discrimination.[11]

Although the March was the result of a variety of motives, its official aims were rather sharply stated, with attention particularly focused on the civil rights legislation pending in Congress. The question of whether or not support of the Kennedy program was the real motivating force behind the March became a matter of some dispute. Kennedy aides did play a part in the planning of the protest, particularly through the good offices of Walter Reuther.[12] James Foreman felt that conservative black leaders had connived with church leaders and labor bosses to make the whole demonstration a tribute to Kennedy's civil rights efforts. "If people had known that they had come to Washington to aid the Kennedy administration," Foreman charged, "they would not have come in the numbers they did."[13] There is much truth in the conclusion that people did not come to Washington only to support the Kennedy legislation. Tommy Greenwood came up from Knoxville, Tennessee, "because I'm for freedom," and Bernice Hudson travelled from Detroit because she wanted "to be free and see all Negroes free."[14] As the official program noted, that day brought together "the dreams, hopes, ambitions, tears and prayers of millions."[15] Because the March was so highly charged with emotion, it was to take on a symbolic significance that surpassed the immediate objective of legislation.

Before the March there was a sense of apprehension and tension: the *Washington Daily News* observed that the general feeling was that the Vandals were coming to sack Rome.[16] Nothing could have been further from describing the rally that took place. In its front page headlines the *Washington Post* termed it a "Solemn, Orderly, Plea for Equality."[17] "It was a wonderful and immensely important thing that happened here," Marya Mannes commented. "And the only pity of it was that the people who fled it, the people who deplored it, the people who resented it, missed one of the great democratic expressions of this century, a people claiming, with immense control and dignity, the American rights long denied them."[18] Time, however, was to erode, even destroy utterly, this confidence in the democratic process for some black leaders. Four years later Floyd McKissick could tell the National Conference on Black Power that "we are given rhetoric about power sharing: 'the Land of the Free. Home of the Brave.' 'With liberty and justice for all.' . . . They were never intended to mean anything for Black People. They were written when we were still slaves."[19]

In reality, the March was a watershed, a crucial incident in the struggle to capture the ideology and employ its power to legitimize and galvanize the movement. It was not, however, fully perceived as such at the time. Nevertheless, from the perspective of almost two decades it is clear that the March on Washington was a moment when black spokesmen began to decide whether to embrace the institutionalized ideology which had been passed down through the generations or to articulate a more radical version of the American ideology which was closer to the views of nineteenth-century abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Gar-

rison. This division was most sharply illustrated in the contrast between the speeches of John Lewis of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and Martin Luther King, Jr., of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The leaders of the March clearly identified with the traditional, conservative interpretation of the ideology as epitomized by King. The March leadership saw in the harsher rhetoric of John Lewis a clear deviation from the general American consensus. Lewis, nevertheless, was the precursor of a new militancy, one that ignored the institutionalized ideology and seemed, rather, to hark back to its more revolutionary roots.

The Lewis speech, then, was not perceived as conforming to the accepted view of the ideology and was thus rejected by the managers of the March. This speech, in marked contrast to King's effort—which was widely seen as the quintessential statement of the spirit of the Movement and a reaffirmation of its place in the panorama of American values—questioned certain of the basic interpretations of the ideology, especially as the ideology had come to represent a progressive rather than revoltuionary ideal. An analysis of the Lewis and the King speeches illuminates both the ways in which control of the ideology was sought as well as the ways in which it was exploited.

By noon on Wednesday, August 28, 1963, the great crowd overflowed the Mall at the foot of Lincoln's Memorial waiting for the speeches to start. The members of the crowd noted the delay, but they could not know that it was caused by a contretemps over John Lewis' speech. John Lewis was twenty-five years old, the youngest of the day's speakers. The new chairman of SNCC had, nevertheless, been arrested twenty-four times and had been beaten by white mobs during the famous 1961 Freedom Rides. He was young; he was angry; he was the future. The day before the March, SNCC had issued a copy of the speech to the press. Apparently Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle of Washington and others saw the copy and were aghast. According to the *New York Times*, Archbishop O'Boyle threatened to withdraw from the program—he was scheduled to pronounce the invocation—if Lewis' speech was not modified.[20] The basic complaint seemed to be with what was perceived as the incendiary tone of speech, but it was probably the deviation from the traditional ideology that could be sensed in the speech and that led March leaders Randolph and Reuther to observe that the original draft was "not consistent with the tenor" of the day's events.[21] Particular objections focused on Lewis' rejection of the Kennedy civil rights bill, a favorable reference to moving through the South like Sherman, and an attack on the federal government.[22] Just as the program was beginning, the leaders of the March met in a small room inside the Lincoln Memorial to try to arrive at a compromise. Most had serious reservations about Lewis' speech and insisted upon changes. James Foreman, then an active leader of SNCC, took a prominent part in the controversy, negotiating on behalf of Lewis. The issue having been joined, Archbishop O'Boyle and the other speakers

agreed to address the crowd, while Foreman helped to prepare a compromise draft. This draft was not actually finished until after several other speakers had presented their addresses.[23]

Finally the program began. It was evident that the ideology, and the whole vision of America that it symbolized, strongly influenced the parade of dignitaries who stepped to the microphone. The speakers attempted to make it clear that this protest was within the American tradition. Although Philip Randolph described the marchers as "the advance guard of a massive moral revolution," neither he nor the other speakers seriously questioned basic American institutions. The idea of America as the land of liberty was an overriding theme—grounded in appeals to both moral and legal values. In his invocation Archbishop O'Boyle prayed that our "heritage of democracy" would prevail and asked for divine blessing on those who were "dedicated to the principles of the Constitution of these United States." It was quite natural that the concept of liberty would be of supreme importance on an occasion designed to protest oppression. That the ideology itself was working to shape the rhetoric stems from the nature of the occasion as well; the March was meant to influence directly the established institutions of government, to bring about social and political change in the traditional fashion of applied pressure and favorable, impressive publicity. This was not an attack on "the establishment"—rather an attempt to bring it to its senses. The "moral revolution" was hardly revolutionary at all. As the rhetoric makes clear, the appeal was for a restoration, a return to basic principles and not an overturn of society.[24]

The day was, in a particular sense, A. Philip Randolph's day. The seventy-four year old President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters had suggested the March, had enlisted support, and had generally overseen its planning. A Vice-President of the AFL-CIO, Randolph was accustomed to negotiating and struggling within the system. While he called for a "moral revolution," he was fairly specific about what needed to be done—passage of civil rights, employment, and education legislation. His brief speech was a carefully woven interlace of appeals to freedom and calls for the enactment of a liberal social program. Arguing that the civil rights "revolution reverberates throughout the land," and "is not confined to the Negroes," Randolph asserted that the goal of this revolution was not "merely the passage of civil rights legislation." He called for a Fair Employment Practices Act, public accommodations legislation, integrated public schools, federal aid to education, and a solution to the problems of unemployment created by automation. There is an interesting disparity between the recurring revolutionary references and the suggestions for specific action. The aging labor leader made no call for the workers to arise, no demand for a *different* government or kind of government. Deploring the "Mrs. Murphy" clause in the public accommodation act which gave those who rented rooms in their own houses the right to ex-

clude blacks, Randolph claimed that "real freedom will require many changes in the nation's political and social philosophies and institutions." Yet, even though Randolph maintained that "the sanctity of private property takes second place to the sanctity of a human personality," the oppressive Mrs. Murphys were not to be overthrown, deprived of their political or social power; he simply asked that they be compelled by law to respect the equal rights of other citizens.

The assumption expressed by Randolph and many of his colleagues on August 28, 1963 was that freedom could not be given to some and withheld from others. Thus, the movement for black rights was necessary to free whites as well: "Our white allies know that they cannot be free while we are not." The enemies of blacks, then, were the enemies of the very conception of America as the land of liberty. The transformation of the ideology into traditional political terms came when Randolph identified these enemies: "Look for the enemies of Medicare, of higher minimum wages, of Social Security, of Federal aid to education, and there you will find the enemy of the Negro, the coalition of Dixiecrats and reactionary Republicans that seek to dominate the Congress." The momentum of the movement, he urged, had to be maintained so that those who would aid blacks could be bolstered. "We must develop strength," Randolph said, "in order that we may be able to back and support the civil rights program of President Kennedy."

Randolph was followed on the platform by a parade of other speakers. Eugene Carson Blake's speech was laden with references to the symbols of the American heritage and relied heavily on the sanctity of historic tradition. The American flag, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Emancipation Proclamation were all cited and Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson quoted. The United Auto Workers leader Walter Reuther stressed particularly that the civil rights struggle was for the realization of the American promise, a movement to bridge the "moral gap between American democracy's noble promises and its ugly practices." The "great moral crusade" was, in reality, "to arouse America to the unfinished work of American democracy."

Whitney Young and Roy Wilkins, perhaps the two most conservative black spokesmen, remained within the prevailing ideological framework. According to Young, pressure should be put on Congressmen and Senators in order to remind them of basic American convictions: that "civil rights, which are God-given and Constitutionally guaranteed, are not negotiable. . . ." Wilkins, too, pointed out that "we came here to speak to our Congress." He asserted that Congress knew "of the greatness of this whole nation, of its reservoirs of strength, and of the sicknesses which threaten always to sap its strength and to erode, in one or another selfish and stealthy and specious fashion, the precious liberty of the individual which is the hallmark of our country among the nations of the earth." Wil-

kins, true to the American ideology, saw liberty as the "hallmark" of the nation and believed that only a sickness within the body politic had caused the terrible deviation from the healthy ideal.

Speaking for Catholic laymen, Mathew Ahmann announced his determination to work for civil rights legislation that would give blacks jobs and the right to deal equally with other citizens. Rabbi Joachim Prinz who had personally witnessed the rise of Hitler strongly embraced "the great American idea"—the idea of individual liberty. Prinz reminded his audience that the real threat to liberty, whether in the Germany of the 1930s or the United States of the 1960s, was silence. He pointed to the incongruity between the American ideal and American practice: he described the children of America who pledge allegiance to the flag in schoolrooms across the country, speaking "fervently and innocently of this land as the land of liberty and justice for all," while liberty and justice did not exist for all. Prinz also saw the civil rights struggle as one that affected not only blacks. Action must be taken "not for the sake of the Negro, not for the sake of the black community, but for the sake of the image, the idea and the aspiration of America itself."

These speakers—O'Boyle, Randolph, Young, Wilkins, Ahmann, and Prinz—did not call for the destruction of the system so that a new and more just one could arise. They called for a reformation of the system so that it would work as it was supposed to. In 1775 Joseph Warren had characterized the early New Englanders as "determined to find a place in which they might enjoy their freedom, or perish in the glorious attempt."[25] Blacks and their liberal allies were now themselves the historical progeny of this attempt. America was believed to be the land of liberty; almost two hundred years had deeply engrained the ideology. The rhetoric that characterized the day of protest, then, was a rhetoric informed by the American ideology. It was a rhetoric that called back to the old ideal of liberty and demanded that it be applied anew to black Americans. While the civil rights movement was popularly thought of as politically liberal, it was hardly radical. At root, the rhetoric of the March on Washington was ideologically, if not politically, conservative. On the surface, however, the rhetoric could appear "revolutionary" because it embodied the ideals of the American Revolution. The ideology made it possible to talk about revolution while preserving institutional viability.

Not all black spokesmen, however, drew upon the American ideology in their protest rhetoric. Malcolm X, who deplored the March on Washington, complained that black leaders thought in too narrow terms. While condemning them, Malcolm was accurate in his description of their basic orientation: in a speech in New York in 1965 he complained, "they spend most of their time trying to prove they're Americans."[26] John Lewis, the controversial speaker from SNCC, shared many of Malcolm's sentiments and he had planned to express them from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Even as the first speakers addressed the crowd, however, the

March leaders required Lewis to alter his speech, forcing it into the mold of the ideology. The speech that Lewis did not deliver—or rather, was not allowed to deliver—foreshadowed the repudiation of the civil rights movement by later black power spokesmen. But what is important to an understanding of the rhetoric of the March on Washington is that the civil rights leaders engineered emendations in Lewis' speech so that the traditional ideology and the spirit of reform prevailed over Lewis' more truly radical effort to reshape the ideology. Hence, the speech Lewis planned to present and the speech he actually gave must each be considered in order to appreciate the dominant character of the rhetoric of the March.[27] In contrast, King based his entire speech upon a call for reform. Taken together, the speeches of Lewis and King offer particularly interesting examples of the rhetoric of protest and its relationship to the American ideology.

As the earlier study of the Inaugural Addresses reveals, it had become virtually axiomatic that liberty in this land of liberty was preserved, in part at least, by the stability and viability of the nation's institutions. The validity of the ideology, as it were, was maintained through the orderly operation of government—the conservative nature of the Revolutionary heritage thus diverting radical attack on what was by tradition established. To effect legislative action was the primary stated goal of the March on Washington. No black leader was willing to say that all problems would be solved if the Kennedy program was enacted, but it was clear that passage of the civil rights bill pending in Congress was generally desired by the March leadership. The March was billed as and praised as an orderly, peaceful protest in the best American tradition: the practice by the people of their Constitutionally guaranteed right to seek redress of grievances. In effect, the March was a lobbying effort, the marshalling of support and the applying of political pressure in a manner not unusual, and certainly not inimical to traditionally accepted practice. It became apparent that John Lewis did not believe in the basic good faith of the system, acceptance of which was crucial to the preservation of the assumption that the accepted version of ideology was capable of working in practice through that very system. The nature and extent of support that Lewis and SNCC could give to Kennedy's bill was an issue that spoke directly to this point.

In the original draft of the speech Lewis planned to open with a brief reminder that "we have nothing to be proud of" since so many brothers were poor and starving and could never afford to come to Washington to march. He then immediately took up the civil rights bill announcing: "In good conscience, we cannot support, wholeheartedly, the administration's civil rights bill, for it is so too little, and too late." Lewis planned to reject the bill because it did not protect blacks from brutality, enumerating by way of example, the citizens of Danville, Virginia "who must live in constant fear in a police state," the "hundreds of people who have been arrested on trumped-up charges," the "three young men in Americus,

Georgia, who face the death penalty for engaging in peaceful protest." Likewise, the voting section of the bill would fail in its professed purpose of securing the franchise for black people. It would also fail to prevent the terrorizing of those who sought to vote. Nor would the bill in any of its parts "protect the homeless and starving people of this nation." Even though the word "wholeheartedly" appeared in the prefatory statement, it was clear that there was no sense in which Lewis could be said to support the proposed legislation. On the contrary, the passage was a forceful condemnation of the bill and a denial of its effectiveness. According to James Foreman, it was Eugene Carson Blake who objected to the word "wholeheartedly." Participating in the negotiations before he began his own speech, Blake wanted the phrase changed to read: "we support with reservations." The SNCC group agreed and Foreman observed: "It seemed like a small matter to us, then; we thought that Blake and the others siding with him were just masturbating over words." Later, however, Foreman saw a more disquieting motivation. He believed that "it was the intent of the Kennedy administration for the white liberals and sellout Toms to create a base of support, . . . to have apparent unanimity of support for the civil rights bill. . . . It did not matter that one group supported 'with reservations'; it supported, nevertheless. If, on the other hand, we had said 'we cannot support wholeheartedly' or 'we cannot support' period, the whole game would have been shot." [28]

There was without question a strong desire to preserve unanimity to try to bring about pressure on Congress, and to minimize dissent, particularly about the Kennedy bill. And it is also true that Kennedy staff members were helping behind the scenes. But Foreman's conviction that the whole conflict came about only to preserve a united front on the bill is, perhaps, too simplistic. The rejection by Lewis of the civil rights bill was only a prelude to his rejection of the political process, for the original draft dismissed the bill in such a way so as not to suggest legislative alternatives. The stance was damningly negative in the eyes of the leadership; the amended version of the speech was more compatible with the kind of stand taken by Wilkins, for example, that the proposed bill must be strengthened. As delivered, the speech read, "It is true that we support the present civil rights bill in the Congress. We support it with great reservations, however." Where before Lewis simply said what the bill would not do, the actual speech indicated that "unless Title Three is put in" the bill would be ineffectual. The change might have been slight, but it was fundamental—more so than even James Foreman suspected. For the change signaled a shift from contempt for the legislative efforts to a call for amending a particular piece of legislation. Furthermore, the discussion of the bill was but the tip of the iceberg: the original draft, as it was developed, revealed the depth and magnitude of rejection and must have been exceedingly chilling to leaders commited to the accepted American ideology.

As Lewis deprecated the voting rights section of the civil rights bill, he pronounced the slogan, "One man, one vote," and went on to identify it as "the African cry." He added, "It is ours too. (It must be ours.)" The seed of the true revolutionary stance can be seen here. Later black militants were to reject categorically traditional interpretations of American values. Ernest Bormann, commenting on black rhetoric in the late sixties and early seventies, observed that "in general, the contemporary black agitator places his movement outside the mainstream of American society and rejects the American dream." He went on to explain that "the decision to reject the American culture and tradition has forced the agitators to search for other histories and other cultures with which to build a sense of community among their followers and give meaning and relevance to their movement. Some have identified . . . with the African heritage of their ancestors."[29] The foreshadowing of that characteristic is clear in Lewis' speech. The change made in this section was to add another sentence which deflected the radical impact of such an idea and forced it nearer to the traditional ideological mold. Following the phrase "it must be ours" came the words "Let us tell the Congress: One man, one vote."

Lewis' attack on the established political parties, clearly integral parts of the system, was scathing. His original draft proclaimed, "We are now involved in a serious revolution." Obviously, the revolution would need to bring about substantial political change. Lewis said: "This nation is still a place of cheap political leaders who build their careers on immoral compromises and ally themselves with open forms of political, economic, and social exploitation. What political leaders here can stand up and say 'My party is the party of principles'? The party of Kennedy is also the party of Eastland. The party of Javits is also the party of Goldwater. Where is *our* party?" The leaders were cheap, immoral, and exploitative, according to Lewis, and there was *no* party that could represent black interests. The modifications in the text blunt the thrust of such blanket political condemnation and suggest, rather, a need for reform that the original does not. The revolution was termed a "social" one, and the "cheap politicians" reference became: "By and large American politics is dominated by politicians who build their careers. . . ." The attack on politicians, many of whom sat prominently on the platform that day, was softened by the addition, "There are exceptions, of course. We salute those."

Lewis proceeded, in the original draft, to question the motives of the federal government in a passage that was excised—"It seems to me that the Albany indictment [of nine SNCC leaders] is part of a conspiracy on the part of the Federal Government and local politicians in the interests of expediency." Lewis wanted to know, "which side is the Federal Government on?" He certainly did not assume that the government, specifically the Kennedy Administration, was dedicated to the protection of the fundamental American rights of all citizens. It was clear that Lewis did not ac-

cept the idea that the land of liberty needed only to be awakened to its rightful obligations. He used the word "revolution" in a much purer sense and much more frequently than did other speakers. Asserting that "the revolution is at hand," Lewis called for blacks to "free ourselves of the chains of political and economic slavery." He argued that "the people, the masses," must bring about "radical change," by participation in the "struggle." "The revolution is a serious one . . . . All of us must get in the revolution. Get in . . . until the revolution is complete . . . . The black masses are on the march! . . . All the forces [of southern political leaders] won't stop this revolution." The exhortation in the original draft culminated with the passage that seemed most to offend Archbishop O'Boyle, and certainly suggested a militancy more threatening than anything thus far seen: "The time will come when we will not confine our marching to Washington. We will march through the South through the Heart of Dixie, the way Sherman did. We will pursue our own 'scorched earth' policy and burn Jim Crow to the ground—nonviolently. We shall fragment the South into a thousand pieces and put them back together in the image of democracy. We will make the action of the past few months look petty. And I say to you, WAKE UP AMERICA!!!" Despite his insertion of the word "nonviolently," it was highly unlikely that the spirit of this section was in harmony with the rest of the rhetoric of the March on Washington as Randolph, Wilkins, Blake and the rest perceived it. This peroration was the peak of a series of ideas which Lewis labeled revolutionary, and in which very little of the usual tone and vocabulary of nonviolence and reform were present.

The key to the nature of Lewis' response to the prevailing vision of the ideology can be found in two references to the Revolutionary period itself. The copy of the Lewis speech distributed beforehand urged the black masses to stay in the streets "until the revolution is complete." The amended version read: "until the unfinished revolution of 1776 is complete." The former version gave absolutely no suggestion that the orginal American Revolution was to be carried on. That was, indeed, the implication of much of what others had said, as they expressed the conviction that the ideology could be made to work. Such a concept, however, was not at all implicit in Lewis' words or argument. Furthermore, Lewis had planned to indict politicians of both parties because they had "betrayed the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence." This reference was omitted along with the passage that led to it in which Lewis rejected the slow process of judicial redress and insisted that "we will take matters into our own hands and create a source of power, outside of any national structure that could and would assure us a victory." In Lewis' vocabulary, patience was "a dirty and nasty word"; blacks demanded their freedom now. Surely a return to the revolutionary "Declaration," which justified the overthrow of the established government, was much more consistent with the entire rhetorical stance of Lewis' speech than was a call for the completion of the

1776 Revolution. The "unfinished revolution" which began two centuries before does, after all, have a very evolutionary quality about it. The demand for fulfillment of the promise implies that the promise is capable of being fulfilled under the present system. The notion of progress was clearly imbedded in such a demand, whereas the rejection of "the courts . . . the President, the Justice Department, ... Congress" in order to entrust power only in "our own hands" was a plain denial of the efficacy of established institutions. It contained the seed of repudiation of the American ideology which was soon to flourish in the rhetoric of the black power movement.

John Lewis had intended to present a truly revolutionary speech—one, that is, that was closer to a revolutionary spirit than to the ideological heritage of the American Revolution, institutionalized and encrusted with tradition as it was. Despite his desire to advance a radical position, Lewis had been thwarted, and all of the major addresses at the March reflected a reformist stance based upon a faith in the prevailing conception of the American ideology. Certainly, this faith was most evident in the speech presented by Martin Luther King, Jr. who was the next, and final speaker. There is little disagreement that the electrifying moment of the March came with King's speech. This speech was not only seen by those present as the most moving event of the day, it was also the best example of the grounding of black aspirations in the American tradition, of protest rhetoric strongly reflective of the ideology *that had evolved* from the American Revolution.

Martin Luther King, Jr. first gained attention as the leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1956, and then, as founder and President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, he helped to direct the protest movement throughout the South. Just a few months before the March he wrote from a jail in Birmingham that "we know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."[30] At thirty-four years of age, Dr. King had been in jail at least 12 times and had travelled 20,000 miles a year promoting his cause.[31] His reputation was international; a year after the March he was to become the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in its history.

To those who formed the most massive protest rally Washington had ever seen, Martin Luther King, Jr. was the most prominent spokesman—a living symbol of the movement itself. He did not disappoint those who heard him. His speech, the climax of the rally, was perhaps the most passionate moment not only of the day, but of the civil rights movement itself. The speech was one of fierce, penetrating, lilting contrasts—contrasts in theme and argument, highlighted by King's organizational pattern and style. Infusing the whole was the essence of the American ideology which depicted the nation as the home of liberty and the sanctuary of the oppressed, guided by God's almighty hand.[32]

The principal theme of King's speech was the failure of the ideology to manifest itself in the lives of black people—the contrast of the promise and the practice, the ideal and the reality. Beginning with a reference to the "symbolic shadow" of Lincoln, King extolled the Emancipation Proclamation which ended the "long night of their captivity."[33] The Emancipation Proclamation is one of those historic documents laden with rhetorical significance of the most far-reaching and enduring kind. In popular conception it "freed the slaves." No matter what limitations were placed on this freedom, no matter how specific it was in freeing slaves only in certain parts of the country, no matter if the motivation might have come in part from the desire to prevent Great Britain from recognizing the Confederacy, no matter that political pressures at home more than humanitarian reasons may have brought about its issuance; the Emancipation Proclamation rises above its own limitations to a towering symbolic meaning. Like Magna Carta, the fine print did not matter; its rhetorical significance was that in popular belief it proclaimed human freedom and dignity. Lincoln, then, had freed the slaves; the Proclamation had promised freedom. "But one hundred years later, the Negro is still not free." King's first words set out the basic contrast of the fundamental theme: blacks who were promised liberty were, in fact, denied it.

Blacks, King went on to say, were languishing in the corners of American society; the Negro was "an exile in his own land." The land, of course, was a great one, "a vast ocean of material prosperity." The black was isolated in it, but it was his *own land*. It was most important for the development of the theme, and very much in keeping with the ideological mold of the occasion and the other speakers, that King stressed the indigenous character of blacks. Alienated they were, perhaps, but not alien. The condition was "shameful" precisely because blacks were Americans. The founding fathers, the "architects of the republic who wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence," were, in King's words, "signing a promissory note *to which every American was to fall heir* [italics added]." And King was quick to assert that "Americans" referred to "black men as well as white men." King did not try to "prove" that blacks were Americans, he merely asserted it. The ideology allowed him to, and there were few who contested, or even thought of contesting, such an assumption. Malcom X did, of course, but in 1964 he was not in the mainstream of black thought and certainly was considered beyond the pale by whites. Later more blacks would join Malcolm in abandoning moderation. In their bitter attacks on the system which oppressed them, they would deny the relevance of the American tradition to them,[34] but in that summer of discontent attention was clearly directed toward the denial of the rights of black citizens—rights guaranteed by the American system and sanctified by the ideology.

King's argument was that the denial of these basic rights caused their unrest—that black discontent was "legitimate." In April of 1963, while

King sat in a Birmingham jail, eight prominent Alabama clergymen deplored the actions of "outsiders," and called the demonstrations then going on "unwise and untimely." Furthermore, while they reaffirmed their condemnation of "hatred and violence," the clergymen went on to "point out that such actions as incite to hatred and violence, however technically peaceful those actions may be," were not very productive.[35] But King's point, reiterated in the Washington speech, was that there could be no compromise with the fundamental need of blacks to be recognized as full citizens. So not only was it incumbent on America to "make real the promises of democracy," but that those promises had to be fulfilled *now*. King then began a variation on the principal theme when he stressed the urgency in granting to blacks their rights.

Again, the contrasts underlined King's point. Gradualism was pitted against the fulfillment of democracy, segregation against justice, injustice against brotherhood. And through it all, the insistent note sounded strong. Racial peace could be bought only at the price of justice; only when the country lived up to its professions could it hope for tranquility. "There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America," King stated flatly, "until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights."

But racial unrest was not racial revolution. King spoke of the "whirlwind of revolt," but he did not call for destruction. It was because King and most of his audience, white and black, had been so schooled in the ideology that he was not able to ask that the liberty tree, rotten with corruption, be chopped down, to be replaced by a new and different sapling. Instead, he asked only that it be allowed to bear its natural fruit. The revolution was to continue to be a conservative one; it was to be "creative protest," and it was definitely to be fought by a "bi-racial army." Like so many of the other speakers, King argued for the indivisibility of freedom and asserted, "We cannot walk alone."

Nothing less than the justice they deserved, and that had been promised to them, would satisfy blacks. But the constituents of justice as enumerated by King form a recognizable part of traditional American aspirations: blacks wished to be free of police persecution, to be able to stop in a motel to rest after a day's travel, to be given the opportunity to break out of the poverty and deprivation of the ghetto, to be able to use the same public facilities as other Americans, to be able to vote—in sum, to have hope. Over one hundred and ninety years earlier Joseph Warren had called America the "asylum of the oppressed,"[36] and surely such an asylum would provide the basic ingredients of liberty that King envisioned. King recognized the suffering and legal persecution of civil rights workers; he was "not unmindful that some of you have come here out of excessive trials and tribulation." But this recognition of evil was balanced by the conviction that "somehow this situation can, and will be changed." It would be changed not by proposing new ideals but by implementing old ones. Thus was Martin Luther King led to his dream. "I still have a dream.

It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed—we hold these truths to be self evident,, that all men are created equal."

So convinced was King of the potency of the ideology and its promise that he believed the guiding ideas of the country, when summoned up, could move mountains. The tactic, then, was not violent overthrow. As Gandhi had sought to touch the conscience of the British nation by peaceful but forceful moral protest, so King hoped to arouse the conscience of white America. Physical force was to be met with "soul force." The movement was to be characterized by "dignity and discipline," and must never "degenerate into physical violence." It was clear that the "moral revolution" was one that sought the return to accepted values in their original, pure state; the temple of liberty was to be cleansed, not destroyed. King articulated his dream, making it concrete, making it valid, and making hopeful the possibility of its coming true. It was a dream, when realized, that would lead to the reaffirmation of the essence of America: "the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning— 'my country 'tis of thee; sweet land of liberty; of thee I sing; land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring.' " This phrase from the traditional "America," King took as the cornerstone of his peroration: from every part of the country freedom should be made to ring until, as King ended with the words of the old Negro spiritual, all people, not blacks alone, but all Americans together would be able to sing, "Free at last, free at last; thank God Almighty, we are free at last."

King's theme, so deeply rooted in the American tradition, was reinforced significantly by his organizational pattern and his balanced style, both of which developed the contrasts and the hope of the speech, while generating tremendous emotional power. The towering statue of the pensive Lincoln physically dominated the day's proceedings. President Lincoln had, in his Second Inaugural Address, recalled the mood and the events at the time he took his first oath of office in 1861; no one then had expected such a long and ferocious war and no one had looked for results so "fundamental and astounding." The basic cause of the war, Lincoln said all knew, was slavery—neither side "anticipated that the *cause* of the conflict itself should cease."[37] Slavery was ended by Lincoln, the Great Emancipator. King's opening words, "Five score years ago," and his reference to Lincoln's "symbolic shadow" began the speech with what was the promise symbolized by Lincoln—the promise to end the degradation of human slavery. The action a century before "came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity." King's first major point, which was made economically and forcefully, was that blacks were, by the legal action and moral weight of America's martyr-hero President, free. There was a strong ironic note in commencing with a reference to what should have been the end of slavery, but what was, in fact, the beginning of a long,

tortured struggle by blacks to attain the rights presumably guaranteed them. The first point, that blacks were by right free, was taken as a given, as it might be in a nation whose history was seen as the fulfillment of the idea that it was the land and asylum of liberty.

King's second point was the contrast of the first: blacks were still manacled and chained. Physical slavery was replaced by the terrible slavery of poverty and discrimination. With the contrast made, the two points were then merged by King into a demand to "make real the promises of democracy." King rarely strayed from the reality-practice comparison, and his organization consistently heightened it. The militancy of the black community would not be diminished until real citizenship was attained. It was a "marvelous new militancy" that could not be allowed to erupt into destructive revolution, but that also could not be allowed to cease until full justice had been given to blacks.

As the third point in his speech, King predicted that "one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed." It was through this prophecy that King detailed his dream—a dream that envisioned brotherhood, that saw even Mississippi as an "oasis of freedom," and Alabama as a place where black and white children could join hands. King swiftly and deftly transformed the dream to "hope," and then to a "faith." The faith would sustain blacks in the work needed to bring about the day of freedom. And thus King came to his stirring conclusion. With freedom ringing from the mountain tops of the North and West, "but not only that," from the mountains, the hills, the molehills of the South, King ended with the mighty crescendo of "free at last." By way of his three major points, each one elaborated upon and embellished, he had come from the promise, through the reality, into the hope, and finally to the vision of fulfillment. Along with the organizational supports for the ideology, stylistic qualities seemed particularly well suited to the ideological mold.

As King progressed through his speech, he wove a rich and emotional tapestry. Every word seemed designed to heighten the theme and point up the ideal. Yet, it was not only the words that gave power to the speech. King's delivery, shaped and honed by his years in the pulpit, reached out and drew in his listeners. Of King's delivery, critic Arthur Smith has observed: "Often speaking in the same melodious cadence black preachers had been using for years, King could captivate his audience by dropping the vocal pitch to give a sense of foreboding to the tone." To Smith, Martin Luther King "was the epitome of the black preacher."[38] Lerone Bennett, Jr., in his essay on the Washington March, sees King's speech as one of the keys to understanding the March; it was not so much the words as their expression. "The rhythms and the intonation and the halts and breaks: these called back all the old men and women who had this dream and died, dishonored; called back rickety Negro churches on dirt roads and the men and women who sat in them, called them back and found

them not wanting, nor their hoping in vain." These rhythms and King's intonation, according to Bennett, "called back all the pain and all the agony, and held forth the possibility of triumph; they called back Emmett Till and Medgar Evers and all the others; called back ropes and chains and bombs and screams in the night; called back one room walk-up flats and roaches and rats, called them back said they would soon be over."[39]

King's language, and the way it was patterned, provides an illuminating insight into the rhetoric of the preacher-protestor. The intermingling of the Bible and traditional American values produced a dramatic rendering of the ideology as did the strategic stylistic choices made by King. His style was intricate, an elaborate design formed largely by balance and repetition, embellished by metaphor, and striking for the quality of its juxtapositions.

King began the speech with a cluster of metaphoric contrasts. The Proclamation was a "beacon" for those who had been "seared in the flames of withering injustice"; the long night of captivity was ended by "joyous daybreak." The hope was quickly dashed, however. Using repetition of the phrase "one hundred years later," King contrasted the contemporary reality with the historical promise. The harshness of the situation was underlined by his slavery metaphors: "manacles of segregation," and "chains of discrimination." The alienation and isolation of black people from the society into which they were supposedly admitted was depicted by King's image of the black who "lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity." Furthermore, he "languished" in corners, he was an "exile" in what was ostensibly his own land. Precisely because such a condition was directly contrary to American professions could it be called "shameful."

Most fully developed of all King's metaphors was the financial metaphor of "the check." Perhaps it was an attempt to concretize the situation in a way that everyone could readily understand. Perhaps, in a material society, such a reference might have been considered to have special force. It was, however, the least inspiring part of the speech. Its labored, prosaic quality did not do justice to its point: that the "magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence" should guide our actions. Its extensive elaboration, in which all the parts fit, gave the metaphor a baroque quality that made the comparison seem overdone: a promissory note that had been defaulted on, a bad check, insufficient funds, vaults of opportunity, a check that would give upon demand the riches of freedom, the security of justice. The metaphor was simply inflated beyond its capacity; nevertheless, it was designed to portray clearly that America was guilty of default. Blacks were not asking for a handout; they were asking that the check already given them be honored. This metaphor, to which a relatively extensive part of the speech was devoted, is a palpable indication of King's commitment to basic American values. He wanted the bank to pay off. Later, more radical black leaders would talk about robbing

banks as a justifiable way to finance the movement. In a moment of exuberance, Eldridge Cleaver could envision transcending the mere robbery of "one jive bank," and arming the people so that they could walk up to the White House and demand what was their own at the point of a gun.[40] It is not only the dramatic language that is different, but the sentiment that shapes and is reflected in the language. Both King and Cleaver wanted what was theirs, but whereas Cleaver, more true to the essence of revolution, wished to destroy those who had pillaged his people, taking from the oppressors the freedom they had stolen from exploited blacks, King, in the spirit of the Revolutionary ideology, believed that in a land of liberty, liberty must be *shared* by all. "So we have come to cash this check," King said, "a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice." King demanded no less than full participation in the American ideal, but no more than was promised. And this metaphor, for all its technical faults, makes that abundantly clear.

In the next section of his speech, in which he warned whites not to expect peace without justice, and blacks not to resort to violence to obtain justice, King balanced good and evil in a host of opposites. Segregation was a "dark and desolate valley," in contrast to the "sunlit path" of racial justice. The "heat of injustice" would be relieved by "an oasis of freedom"; from a "mountain of despair" would be hewn a "stone of hope"; "jangling discords" would be transformed into a "symphony of brotherhood." The urgency of King's contrasts was reinforced by the repetition of "Now is the time": a time to make real, a time to rise, a time to lift, a time to achieve justice. Four times in as many sentences King called for the immediate fulfillment of the "sacred obligation." And until the promise was kept, he foresaw no rest or tranquility—"The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges."

Repetition was again King's technique as he answered his own rhetorical question: "When will you be satisfied?" It was a repetition that both heightened the climactic quality of the speech, underscored the urgency theme, and finally united with the Biblical allusion in a crescendo that brought together the preacher and the protestor. The long string of negative assertions—"We can never be satisfied. . . . We can never be satisfied. . . . We cannot be satisfied. . . . We can never be satisfied. . . . We cannot be satisfied"—finally culminated with the exclamation: "No, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

The final, most dramatic, portions of King's speech also relied heavily on repetition for effect. There was first the short, directive sequence of "Go backs" (to Mississippi, to Alabama, to South Carolina, to Georgia, to Louisiana, to the ghetto slums of the North) that led King to hope, despite the obvious difficulties that would be faced in these places, that the American dream would come true. The famous series of statements from

which the speech has generally taken its name—those beginning with "I have a dream"—was the heart of the speech. And it is essential to an understanding of King's commitment to the American ideology to remember that the orator explained that his dream was "deeply rooted in the American dream." The method of building through repetition of the initial phrase followed by dramatic contrast (as in King's vision of Mississippi, "sweltering in the heat of oppression," being transformed into "an oasis of freedom and justice") enabled the audience to respond each time with shouts of approval, cries of "Amen" and applause, and to build with the speaker toward an emotional climax that corresponded with the structural one. In fact, in this instance, King found the audience response "so wonderful" that he extemporized the "I have a dream" sequence, which he had often used before, and left the text he had prepared.[41] Again, it was the preacher that triumphed at the emotional peak; the final dream is not like those that had gone before, a dream of racial peace, harmony, and love. It is one that, in a certain logical sense, does not fit. But it does have a psychological fit, for while it is non-specific as to content and vague in its strict relation to the subject, it is an emotional summation lit with the prophetic fire of the preacher: "I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places shall be made plain, and the crooked places shall be made straight and the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

Having reached this emotional height, King paused to reaffirm his faith that the dream would become a reality and then rushed forward to his final series of repetitions. The opening lines of the patriotic anthem, "America," provided King with the phrase that most strongly identified what was to follow with traditional American values, and at the same time with the text of his last climax: "My country 'tis of thee; sweet land of liberty; of thee I sing: land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride; from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And so King launched into the final moments of the speech, beginning seven sentences with "Let freedom ring. . . ." Freedom was to ring not only in the North, but in the South as well, in Georgia, in Tennessee, and in what was obviously the ultimate: "Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. . . ." In the last, climactic minute, the Reverend Dr. King moved the now jubilant congregation by the prediction that men of all colors and religions would some day be able to join hands and "sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last; thank God Almighty, we are free at last." Donald Smith, who was in the crowd, later wrote that "on this momentous afternoon the guilt of oppression and the yoke of subjugation were released in a torrent of passion and tears." Smith went on to observe that King had, in the speech, "effected a marriage of the Negro protest and the American tradition."[42]

119

Martin Luther King's speech reflected the prevailing mood of the March on Washington because that March was seen as the great culminating effort of a peaceful protest, of the attempt to appeal to the conscience of America to share with blacks what was rightly theirs. Not only King's speech, but the entire event, was profoundly influenced by the American ideology and was a tribute to its potent influence. The "tone . . . of hope and optimism," as Floyd McKissick put it, was to change, however, when "Black people who had hoped there was a national conscience realized there was no such thing." McKissick believed that "although few realized it at the time . . . much of the idealism and romanticism of the civil rights movement died that day. For that demonstration culminated years of suffering and toil—and when that cry went unheeded, black America began a revolution."[43] Years after the March and armed with a new, Marxist ideology, James Foreman was to write bitterly that "Dr. King spoke for twenty or more minutes about his dreams while the black people lived in nightmares."[44] Thus, some black protest eventually moved from the rhetoric of civil rights to the rhetoric of black revolution. In this connection, the contrasting rhetoric of Lewis appears to have been the wave of the immediate future. Traditional ideological interpretations certainly did not inform the style or strategy of the new black power spokesmen. Control of the ideology did not assure leaders control of their black followers.

For all the times and ways in which the word "revolution" was used, what happened in Washington on August 28, 1963, was not a revolution that sought to overthrow; it was, nonetheless, Revolutionary in the sense that it maintained those basic ideas developed by the founders of the nation as those ideas had been incorporated into an accepted ideology. One did not hear the distant clatter of the tumbrils that day; the march was, on the contrary, in President John Kennedy's words: a demonstration of "faith and confidence in our democratic government."[45]

The Washington March is an extremely interesting case study of the relationship of protest rhetoric to the American ideology. The civil rights movement, like so many movements in American history, was essentially reformist. The fact that there was some perceptable ideology, there were some ideas—vague or unspecific as they might have been to most people—helped spokesmen to override only current contingencies and focus on the universal essence of what was seen as somehow American. The ideology could, as in the case of the March, shape and direct the rhetoric into a coherency. Certainly most of the rhetoric was predicated on the belief that America was, indeed, supposed to be the land of liberty, the protector of the idea of liberty, the haven for the oppressed. Oppression in America was a flat contradiction of the ideology, and the strategy of protest was not to destroy the ideology and supplant it with a new one; it was, rather, to point out that the contradiction did exist. The years of white representation of blacks as carefree people, happy with their lot, would have tended

to keep the ideology intact while allowing its spirit to be violated in practice. The protest rhetoric of the civil rights movement was meant to rip away the veil of pretense by confronting the nation with its own ideology. The ideology was being made to perform a conservative and yet at the same time progressive function. It directed the rhetoric, and the action intended to be evoked, into legally acceptable and traditionally sanctioned paths; it allowed the proponents of change to work through established institutions; it allowed a strategy of restoration which called upon the country to return to mutually agreed upon and historically hallowed principles. It also did, however, rest on the assumption that being out of phase with the ideology was a motivating dissonent force, one that had the potential to bring the practice into congruence with the theory. Doubts about the power of the ideology to so function, as Lewis demonstrated, were growing.

The American ideology, informing the rhetoric of the March on Washington, robbed it of a truly radical spirit and made it rather the lineal descendent of the American Revolution. While John Lewis talked of "the unfinished revolution of 1776," it was the other speakers who essentially believed that they were but calling for the fulfillment of the American dream; Lewis wanted to smash the chains, not point out that they were really there. If the experience of the civil rights movement generally, and the March on Washington specifically, is any indicator, it might justly be hypothesized that the American ideology has been a bulwark of stability and evolutionary change in America. The rhetoric which mirrors that ideology is founded on the basic assumption of American virtue. The ideology inherited from our Revolution has tended to subvert revolution in later generations and, instead, to lead our reformer rhetoricians as it did King to call on us to live up to our own national ideals, our own national character. The ideology, then, was seen as possessing the power to move, to compel. The dissidents, soon to form the black power movement, saw the application of power in all spheres of political and social life as a way to transform the ideology. The civil rights movement did give way to black power and both left indelible marks of race relations in America. It is impossible to say who actually captured the ideology, although an assertion that its basic *nature* has radically changed for blacks or whites would be difficult to prove. What the rhetoric of the March on Washington does suggest is that the ideology can have overwhelming appeal for reformers, that when it seems to serve a conservative function no one is its exclusive guardian, but when its efficacy is threatened or its interpretation questioned, it cannot serve as the exclusive arbiter of events. Nevertheless, while historical forces and events buffet it, reshape it, enlarge or restrict it. the ideology continues to exert influence, and it continues to be a highly valued prize for which political groups are very much willing to contend.

CHAPTER IV

NOTES

[1]W. E. B. DuBois, "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others," *Souls of Black Folks: Essays and Sketches* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1903), pp. 50-51.

[2]Tom Brady, *Black Monday* (Jackson, Mississippi: The Citizens Council of America, 1955), p. 60.

[3]Cited in Henry Steele Commager, ed., *The Struggle for Racial Equality: A Documentary Record* (Glouster, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1972), p. 69.

[4]Anthony Lewis and the New York Times, *Portrait of a Decade: The Second American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 285. Accounts of depredations against blacks are legion. For example, James Farmer describes the police mob that set after him in Plaquemin, Louisiana at the time of the March on Washington in *Freedom—When?* (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 3-22. Several documented cases of official lawlessness are reported in the June, 1974 issue of *The New South*, the journal of the Southern Regional Council, Atlanta, Georgia.

[5]"Civil Rights," *Time*, August 30, 1963, p. 14.

[6]*New York Times*, August 29, 1963, p. 20.

[7]Farmer, p. 37.

[8]Daniel W. Wynn, *The Black Protest Movement* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1974), pp. 120-121.

[9]Bayard Rustin, "Introduction: A. Philip Randolph," in *A. Philip Randolph at 80—Tributes and Recollections: Excerpts from Speeches Made at the 80th Birthday Dinner* (New York: A. Philip Randolph Institute, 1969), p. 6.

[10]"On the March," *Newsweek*, September 2, 1963, p. 18; Lerone Bennett, Jr., "The March," in *The Day They Marched*, ed. Doris E. Saunders (Chicago: Johnson, 1963), pp. 4-5; brief sketches of the March leaders appear in the *New York Times*, August 29, 1963, p. 21.

[11]"The March on Washington," *Time*, August 30, 1963, p. 11.

[12]Frank Cormier and William J. Eaton, *Reuther* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 386. Other of Reuther's biographers, while admitting that he "helped" to carry out and plan the March, add rather expansively that Reuther, "with his sense of showmanship and efficient organization, including help from Kennedy's staff, brought about a peaceful, impressive gathering of 200,000 people at Lincoln Memorial." Jean Gould and Lorens Hickok, *Walter Reuther: Labor's Rugged Individualist* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1972), p. 349.

[13]James Foreman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 335.

[14]*Washington Post*, August 29, 1963, p. A14.

[15]Official program of "The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom," cited by Donald Smith, "Martin Luther King, Jr.: Rhetorician of Revolt," Diss. Wisconsin 1964, p. 189.

[16]Bennett, p. 5.

[17]*Washington Post*, August 29, 1963, p. 1.

[18]Marya Mannes, "A Mounting Tide," *Washington Post*, August 29, 1963, p. 1.

[19]Floyd McKissick, "Speech at the National Conference on Black Power [July 21, 1967]," in *The Rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement*, eds. Haig Bosmajian and Hamida Bosmajian (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 128.

[20]*New York Times*, August 29, 1963, p. 20.

[21]*Ibid.*

[22]Foreman, pp. 334-336; also, *New York Times*, August 29, 1963, p. 20.

[23]Foreman, pp. 334-336.

[24]John Lewis' speech was a departure from this general thrust while Martin Luther King's was its epitome; each of these speeches will be considered in detail later.

[25]Joseph Warren, *An Oration Delivered March 5th, 1775, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March 1770*, reprint edition (Newport, R.I.: S. Southwick, 1775), p. 6.

[26]Malcolm X, "Black Revolution," *The Voice of Black Rhetoric*, eds. Arthur L. Smith and Stephen Robb (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971), p. 243.

[27]Two texts were used for the comparisons: John Lewis, "Text of Speech to be delivered at Lincoln Memorial: Original," August 28, 1963 (Atlanta: Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), mimeographed, reprinted in Staughton Lynd, *Nonviolence in America: A Documentary History* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), pp. 482-485; the revised text, reported by Foreman to be what Lewis actually said, is in Foreman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, pp. 336-337. Excerpts of both texts were reported in the *New York Times* (August 29, 1963, p. 20) with no deviation from the original version reprinted in Lynd and only slight deviations from the text provided by Foreman.

[28]Foreman, pp. 335-336.

[29]Ernest G. Bormann, *Forerunners of Black Power: The Rhetoric of Abolition* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 240.

[30]Martin Luther King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail [April 16, 1963]," in Bosmajian and Bosmajian, p. 41.

[31]*New York Times*, August 29, 1963, p. 21.

[32]One of the authors of this study, who was present at the March, remembers King's speech as one of those rare moments when the audience and the speaker were in tune, resonating in perfect harmony with each other. There was general agreement that the speech was the highpoint of the day. See, for example, James Reston's comments in the *New York Times*, August 29, 1963, p. 1.

[33]All citations are from the text of King's speech in James R. Andrews, *A Choice of Worlds: The Practice and Criticism of Public Discourse* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), pp. 50-54.

[34]Malcolm X, for example, described himself as "a victim of this American system. And I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don't see any American dream, I see an American nightmare." ("The Ballot or the Bullet" in Andrews, p. 137.)

[35]"Public Statement by Eight Alabama Clergymen [April 12, 1963]," in Bosmajian and Bosmajian, pp. 35-36.

[36]Joseph Warren, *An Oration Delivered March 5th, 1772, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston; to Commemorate the Bloody Tragedy of the Fifth of March, 1770* (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1772), pp. 17-18.

[37]Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865," *Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States from George Washington 1789 to Richard Milhous Nixon 1973* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1974), p. 127.

[38]Arthur L. Smith, *Rhetoric of Black Revolution* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1969), p. 16.

[39]Saunders, *The Day They Marched*, p. 13.

[40]Eldridge Cleaver, "Farewell Address," in Smith and Robb, p. 292.

[41]Donald Smith, "Martin Luther King, Jr.: Rhetorician of Revolt," p. 221n.

[42]*Ibid.*, pp. 224-225.

[43]Floyd McKissick, *Three-Fifths of a Man* (London: Macmillan, 1969), p. 37.

[44]Foreman, p. 334.

[45]"Text of the President's Statements on Rights and on Labor Day," *New York Times*, August 29, 1963, p. 16.

CONCLUSION

Four years after the Treaty of Paris Dr. Benjamin Rush—the Philadelphia physician, scientist and patriot—remarked, "The American War is over: but this is far from being the case with the American revolution." Rush insisted that only "the first act of the great drama" was completed; it remained for Americans "to establish and perfect" their republic and their national character.[1] We have argued in this monograph that rhetoric played an important role in the continuing American Revolution which Dr. Rush foresaw. Indeed, to the extent that the continuing Revolution was a solidification and institutionalization of the fruits of the War for Independence, then the Revolution did not continue—at least, not as a revolutionary force. What did continue was the rhetoric of the American Revolution—the expression, the reaffirmation, and the purification of the ideas inherited from the nation's birth. As Americans struggled for the "perfection" envisaged by Dr. Rush, rhetoric served them by bringing the past to bear upon the present. On the most obvious level, it passed on the Revolutionary tradition; but more than this, it also informed Americans' perceptions; it provided a lens through which the confusion of events could be focused, ordered, and understood. In yet another way, rhetoric served to contrast the Revolutionary ideal with the American reality. When different ideals from the Revolutionary ideology seemed to dictate different courses of action for Americans, rhetoric served to reconcile both the ideal with the reality and the conflicting aspects of the ideology with each other. When the clash between interpretations of the ideology became too extreme, when the ideal and the practice diverged so much as to preclude reconciliation, opposing groups engaged in rhetorical struggles for possession of the past.

American speakers and writers have been quite self-conscious in fulfilling their responsibility to pass on the Revolutionary tradition to the next generation. Historians have become aware of the myth-making tendencies of the early histories of the American Revolution—the "heroic" chronicles by David Ramsay, Mercy Otis Warren, and Parson Weems. These were epideictic discourses in historical form, for they were concerned above all with praise and blame. The founding fathers were portrayed as "flawless paragons, commanding the almost universal allegiance of the population," while the loyalists were denounced as "craven sycophants of a vicious oligarchy."[2] Yet, these histories were late comers to the field of epideictic

literature in America. By the time they appeared near the beginning of the nineteenth century, the oral tradition of ceremonial discourse had been creating and transmitting the American ideology for almost twenty-five years. In occasional addresses, eulogies of national leaders, and, of course, the ubiquitous Fourth of July orations, speakers passed on a network of perceptions and ideas that contributed to the understanding of the American character as something unique. Indeed, as the rhetoric portrayed the ideology, this new land was especially chosen by God as worthy of His special favors. The New Jerusalem idea was as old as the earliest settlements, but the conflict with the Mother Country reinforced such a conception. Divinely blessed as it was, the new country was the logical repository for "liberty," personified and revitalized, fleeing from the political and moral corruption of the Old World Sodom. Such a land, of course, was more than a fit place for the tree of liberty to flourish and spread her seed. From the period of national birth this sense of mission was strong, and it was communicated to succeeding generations in the form of a vision of a new empire, new in territory and new in conception, that would be as mighty as it was free. The Revolutionary tradition, then, was father to an American ideology. Of the public discourses which transmitted the American ideology for two hundred years, the Inaugural Addresses constituted the most formal and important series of speeches Through this regular, orderly rhetorical event the continuity of and unifying power of the ideology were brought to bear on national events and a tradition was created and sustained. While these addresses often lacked originality, this was itself a token of continuity and stability; the past provided the present with predictable sustenance.

Rhetoric did not simply serve as a conduit for the past to exert itself on the present generation; it rather operated selectively to interpret both past and present. The American ideology identified this land as the home of liberty; hence the abuse of loyalists by patriots, while historically an understandable occurrence, could not easily become part of the American past. Carl Becker alludes to the concept of the American past when he observes that "history in this sense cannot be reduced to a verifiable set of statistics or formulated in terms of universally valid mathematical formulas. It is rather an imaginative creation, a personal possession." The past, then, serves as a national memory; it is our "living history."[3] Just as the rhetoric of the American Revolution filters our history so that it can serve as our past, the past serves as a means of perceiving and understanding the present. Thus, instability in the government of a pro-Western Asian country becomes a threat to liberty; the Mexican-American War becomes an expansion of the American empire; and American material prosperity becomes a sign of God's blessing. This tendency of Americans to interpret present problems and to envision the future in terms of the American ideology has led some historicans quite explicitly to instruct our national leaders on how to "use history more discriminatingly."[4]

Not only does our ideology shape our perceptions of the present; it also enters actively into our disputes over public policy, becoming the yardstick against which proposed policies are measured. Thomas Jefferson described the ideals of the American Revolution as "the creed of our political faith, the text of our civic instruction, the touchstone by which to try the services of those we trust." If Americans should deviate from the ideology "in moments of error," Jefferson declared: "let us hasten to retrace our steps. . . ."[5] Over a century later Woodrow Wilson urged his countrymen to "go back and read some of the immortal sentences" of the founding fathers and "see how they set up a standard to which they intended that the nations of the world should rally."[6]

The American ideology, transmitted and transformed from the Revolutionary era, has become a part of the national rhetoric. Americans have struggled to fulfill their immense responsibility as God's chosen people, to carry on this sacred trust. The idea of a rising American empire evolved, or rather mutated, until the empire of free men foreseen by Thomas Paine became the world empire—"the commercial supremacy of the world"—envisioned by Albert J. Beveridge.[7] The most powerful idea of the American ethos—the myth of America as the land of liberty—both fired Americans' passion for progressive reform and led the nation into the holocaust of foreign wars. Leaders as diverse as Martin Luther King and Lyndon Baines Johnson appealed to the American value of liberty as they argued for civil rights legislation.[8] Yet Johnson also joined Woodrow Wilson and John Kennedy in the conviction that Americans must die in distant wars in order to "make the world itself at last free" and "to assure the survival and success of liberty."[9] It is to no avail that hard-headed experts on international relations advise Americans to disregard the sentiments of the Declaration of Independence when formulating foreign policy. The essence of liberty is self-government—or in contemporary language, "self-determination"—and American leaders have not hesitated to invoke the sacred document of 1776 in support of securing liberty for others. Charles Burton Marshall, the Nitze Professor of International Politics of the School for Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, acknowledges the potency of the continuing rhetoric of the American Revolution when he observes: "Ideas explicit or implicit in the Declaration have endured as legitimizing concepts in the national psyche. Presidents, their spokesmen, and their principal advisors, have been wont to turn to such ideas as a way of validating policy undertakings in their own minds. Thus, in a manner unparalleled, our twentieth-century conduct in world affairs has been accounted for in eighteenth-century frames of thought."[10]

Because rhetoric both shapes and reflects thought, it must be pointed out that the ideology does more than rationalize action; it also influences action. The ideology, for example, frequently creates debates over American ideals versus American self interest. In Britain in the nineteenth

century leaders faced similar problems: constitutional governments like their own were admired if they approached the British model, but English statesmen often found themselves allied with the autocrats of Russia or Austria or with the destroyer of constitutionalism, Napoleon III, in order to serve best what they conceived to be British interests. Americans were likewise uneasy that they shared their political bed with dictators. But the restraints of the ideology would probably not allow a prominent American politician to admonish his countrymen as Canning did when he advised Parliament: "Let us not, in the foolish spirit of romance, suppose that we alone could regenerate Europe." Americans could not accept the notion that their attempts to regenerate liberty in the world have been "foolish romance."[11]

Never a static group of concepts, the American ideology had to adjust constantly to its changing setting. The notion of America as the example of liberty to the world, which had served so well during the nineteenth century, became the concept of America as the promoter and defender of liberty throughout the world. When the cautious clung to the traditional version of the ideology, Albert Beveridge asked: does "our duty end with that? Does any man's duty to his children end with mere example?" Should Americans fail to take positive action as the promoter of liberty simply because a foreign people fails to understand our "Nation's high duty?" Beveridge paused only long enough to ask: "Does the parent . . . refrain from discharging this duty if the child resists?"[12] As America has moved fitfully through the twentieth century it has redefined its past and altered its understanding of the American ideology. The debate over the League of Nations, the polemics of isolationism and internationalism, and the rhetoric of the civil rights movement have each contributed to the evolving ideology. Martin Luther King, for example, as he buttressed the civil rights movement with the tenets of the ideology, reinvigorated the tradition with moral fervor. The American dream, as it subsumed King's dream, was one that projected a peaceful, creative, and wholly legitimate way of producing change without tampering with established institutions.

The significance of the past as a rhetorical force is perhaps best illustrated by the struggles of opposing groups to possess it. Although Williams Jennings Bryan and Albert Beveridge were on opposite sides in the imperialism controversy, they both claimed Thomas Jefferson as the father of their policies. Woodrow Wilson and Henry Cabot Lodge each invoked the founding fathers in the League of Nations debate. And in 1976 the government-sponsored American Revolution Bicentennial Administration found itself confronted with the People's Bicentennial Commission. Both bicentennial groups endorsed the traditional function of the American ideology—that Americans should "measure our institutions against the principles of '76"—but they disagreed sharply upon just what those principles were.[13] When President Gerald R. Ford commemorated the Battle of Lexington on April 19, 1975, his conservative use of the past

was booed and jeered by those members of his audience who possessed a more revolutionary memory.[14] The rhetorical struggle over the past provoked a subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee to issue a thirty-page report charging that the People's Bicentennial Commission was attempting "to steal the bicentennial."[15]

If the past is any guide to the future, the rhetorical processes of conforming national policies to the ideology—and of modifying the ideology to changing conditions—will continue to be central to American public discourse. Jimmy Carter's entire 1976 presidential campaign, for example, might be seen as an effort to renew Americans' sense of community—a community defined by its common belief in the American ideology.[16] In assuming office, Carter attested "once again to the inner and spiritual strength of our nation." Using exactly the same Biblical reference that John Winthrop had cited on the deck of the *Arbella* in mid-Atlantic in 1630 when he had addressed his band of Puritans about their special covenant with God,[17] Jimmy Carter reminded Americans of the "timeless admonition" of the ancient prophet Micah: to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God. The renewal of a community based on this faith, Carter sermonized, would create "a new dedication within our government and a new spirit among us all." He went on to speak of America's "unique self-definition" and its "special obligation" to promote personal liberty.[17] Noting that the "passion for freedom" was on the rise in the world, Carter urged that there could be "no nobler nor more ambitious task for America to undertake . . . than to help shape a just and peaceful world that is truly humane."[18]

Having embraced the ideology in his Inaugural Address and having suggested how that ideology ought to influence national policy, it was quite consistent and predictable that Carter would proclaim in his first address before the United Nations that American foreign policy would serve the nation's "historic values and commitments." Moreover, he announced that the United States had an "historical birthright" to be a leader in the campaign to extend human rights. "No member of the United Nations," he continued, "can claim that mistreatment of its citizens is solely its own business. Equally, no member can avoid its responsibilities to review and to speak when torture or unwarranted deprivation of freedom occurs in any part of the world."[19] Thus, the American ideology again exerted itself in the national and international dialogue, transcending individual political leaders, entire administrations, and even political affiliations. And it can be expected to continue to do so in the future.

"The mighty past," to use Theodore Roosevelt's phrase, is not to be taken lightly.[20] The rhetoric of the American Revolution continues, then, not in the crumbling pages of speeches and pamphlets of the 1770s, but in the national dialogue as Americans attempt to perfect their society, their government, and in Dr. Rush's words, "the principles, morals and manners of our citizens. . . ."[21] When President Carter charted the general

principles of his administration, he confessed: "I have no new dream to set forth today, but rather urge a fresh faith in the old dream." Having recalled the American Revolution as "a milestone" in the quest for human liberty, he quickly reminded Americans of their obligation to the past: "The bold and brilliant dream which excited the founders of our nation still awaits its consummation."[22] The rhetorical legacy of the Revolution is not revolutionary after all. What our rhetoric did for us was to establish an ideology that has, in a sense, presided over our evolutionary processes. Though shaken by "the whirlwinds of revolt," the ideology has proved durable as it has proved adaptable. Americans have come to embrace it as a faith, and with Harry Truman they continue to declare: "From this faith we will not be moved."[23]

CONCLUSION

NOTES

[1]Benjamin Rush, "On the Defects of the Confederation," in *The Selected Writings of Benjamin Rush*, ed. Dagobert D. Runes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1947), p. 26.

[2]Bernard Bailyn, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 384. Also see Sidney G. Fisher, "The Legendary and Myth-Making Process in Histories of the American Revolution," American Philosophical Society *Proceedings*, 51 (April-June, 1912), 53-75; and William Raymond Smith, *History as Argument: Three Patriot Historians of the American Revolution* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966).

[3]Carl Backer, "Everyman His Own Historian," *American Historical Review*, 37 (January 1932), 222.

[4]See, for example, Ernest R. May, *"Lessons of the Past": The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

[5]Thomas Jefferson, "Inaugural Address, March 4, 1801," in *Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States from George Washington 1789 to Richard Milhous Nixon 1973* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1974), p. 16; hereafter this volume is cited as *Addresses*.

[6]Woodrow Wilson, "League of Nations [Des Moines, Sept 6, 1919]," in *The Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, ed. Albert Shaw (New York: Review of Reviews, 1924), II, 792.

[7]Albert J. Beveridge, "The March of the Flag," in Beveridge, *The Meaning of the Times and Other Speeches* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1908), p. 48.

[8]Martin Luther King, "I Have a Dream," in James R. Andrews, *A Choice of Worlds: The Practice and Criticism of Public Discourse* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 53; and Lyndon B. Johnson, "We Shall Overcome," in Andrews, p. 82.

[9]Woodrow Wilson, "Declaration of War, April 2, 1917," in *The Messages and Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, I, 383; and John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961," *Addresses*, p. 268.

[10]Charles Burton Marshall, *American Foreign Policy as a Dimension of the American Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1974), p. 12.

[11]*Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 2nd Ser., IV, 1374.

[12]Albert J. Beveridge, "The Command of the Pacific [San Francisco, Sept. 15, 1902]," in Beveridge, *The Meaning of the Times*, p. 197.

[13]*First Principles: The Platform of '76* (Washington, D.C.: People's Bicentennial Commission, 1975), p. 2.

[14]*New York Times*, April 20, 1975, p. 1.

[15]U.S. Senate, Committe on the Judiciary, *The Attempt to Steal the Bicentennial: The People's Bicentennial Commission. A Report of the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws*, 94th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1976). For a response, see "Birthday Burglars Strike; Feds Claim Cake is Missing," *Common Sense* [an occasional publication of the People's Bicentennial Commission], July 4, 1976, p. 2.

[16]See John H. Patton, "A Government As Good As Its People: Jimmy Carter and the Restoration of Transcendence to Politics," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 63 (Oct. 1977), 249-257.

[17]"A Modell of Christian Charity [1630]," *Old South Leaflets, No. 207* (Boston: Old South Association, n.d.), p. 20.

[18]"In Changing Times, Eternal Principles, [Inaugural Address]," *New York Times*, Jan. 21, 1977, p. B1.

[19]"Text of President's Address at U.N. on Peace, Economy and Human Rights," *New York Times*, March 18, 1977, p. A10.

[20]Theodore Roosevelt, "Inaugural Address, March 4, 1905," *Addresses*, p. 185.

[21]Rush, "On the Defects of the Confederation," p. 26.

[22]Inaugural Address, in the *New York Times*, Jan. 21, 1977, p. B1.

[23]Harry Truman, "Inaugural Address, January 20, 1949," *Addresses*, p. 252.